SERMONS
UPON
Several Occasions.

By JOSEPH KELSEY, B.D.
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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

TO THE

Right Reverend Father in God

GILBERT,

Lord Biſhop of *Sarum.*

My LORD,

AS *we cannot give the Worſhip due to God, not having true Conceptions of his Excellencies; ſo neither can we pay a juſt Honour and Reſpect to*

Man, if ignorant of thoſe Attainments which in their Nature merit it. That Freedom of Converſation, into which your Favour hath for many Years admitted me (as the Συγκέλλῳ to the Primitive Patriarchs of the Church) almoſt one of your Family, hath made me know many and great Effects of that Vertue, which, what unpleaſing Entertainment ſoever it may meet with at preſent, yet when it ſhall be taken from us, will (if we be as Wiſe as of Old even bad Men were) be earneſtly ſought

ſought for, and deſired, not eaſily found.

In Aſſurance of that experienced Goodneſs, I have been bold to prefix your Lordſhip's Name to theſe Sermons, which had ever remained amongſt thoſe that have been long dead, had not your Lordſhip's Encouragement given them new Life. Yet, notwithſtanding ſo great an Approbation, who knows (εἰ τὸ ζῆν θανεῖν ἐστι) *whether, as the World is, your Lordſhip's Honour and my own ſincere Intentions had not been better ſecured by their total Suppreſſion. But I had no other*

other way in Publick *to teſtify my Thankfulneſs: In Private, I ſhall never forget to pray for the Happineſs of your ſelf, and of all yours; being ever,*

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's

Moſt Obliged

and

Dutiful Servant,

Joſeph Kelſey.

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SERMON I.

Philippians III. 20.

For our Converſation is in Heaven.

ONE great thing wherein the Excellency of true Religion ſhews it ſelf, is, That it makes the Man, who is *indeed* poſſeſſed of it, to act according to the Reſolutions of Reaſon. *Only the good Man* (as *Plato* ſaid) *knows himſelf, and hath attained the Underſtanding of that Precept, which ſeems to be the Foundation both of a Moral and more Religious Life.* Which, tho' it were the Saying but of a Mortal Man, yet the Ancients thought it of greater Strength and Moment, than that any Human Authority could ſuſtain it: They made a *God* the Author, and that *God*, who by their Theology, in Wiſdom far excelled all the reſt. If we follow this Guide, we ſhall eaſily diſcover, that it is not this

Serm. 1. External Figure we call a Body, the Object of our Senſes, ſubjected to innumerable Infirmities, that conſtitutes the Eſſence of a Man: but that there muſt be ſomething of a more noble and refined Nature, which diſtinguiſheth us from Beaſts, is the Principle of Reaſon and all intellectual Operations. And therefore it is but reaſonable, that in making an Eſtimate of our ſelves, we have a ſpecial reſpect to our better Part, which we call the Soul; not to value our ſelves by the Largeneſs of Worldly Poſſeſſions, Height of Honour, or any other External Advantage; but from that Immortal Nature which came from Heaven, in reſpect whereof we are ſaid to be made after *the Image of God.* According to this Rule, it is, that the good Man knows how to reverence himſelf without any Self-flattery or Admiration, thinking it no Pride to contemn the World, with all the low Delights of Senſe and Time; true Goodneſs filling the Mind with a greater Generoſity and Nobleneſs of Spirit. He truly judgeth it below his high Extraction to entertain too great Familiarity with the Pleaſures of the Earth, as it would be ridiculous in a Prince to proſtitute

ſtitute his Majeſty, and ſully his Splendor, with the Impurities of his Vaſſals. He cannot receive them into his Embraces, nor give them Lodging in his Heart; but obſerves his Diſtance from them, retaining always a Senſe of Honour, and that Fountain of Purity from whence he did deſcend; remembring that *God is his Father*, and he is Partaker of the Divine Nature. Serm. 1.

Some ſuch Conſideration as this, we may believe to have been the Ground of theſe Words of the *Apoſtle*, That a true Chriſtian's *Converſation is in Heaven*; as it is oppoſed to the ignoble Spirit of Vice and Irreligion deſcribed in the foregoing Verſe, *whoſe God is their Belly, who glory in their Shame, who mind Earthly things*, who have loſt all Senſe of their Divine Original, whoſe brutiſh and voluptuous Lives, have ſo debaſed their Minds, and ſpoiled their Reaſon, that they acknowledge no Relation but to this Earth, ſunk in Matter and the Pleaſures of this preſent Life. Theſe (ſaith the *Apoſtle*) are not to be propoſed for your Imitation, but be ye *Followers of us*, whoſe *Converſation is in Heaven*; who walk and behave our ſelves in this World worthy

of our ſelves, worthy of our Original,
Serm. 1. worthy of our Hopes, as becomes that Divine Principle which is in us, and is us; (for the Mind is the Man, as true Philoſophy teaches.) I ſhall therefore endeavour to explain wherein this *Heavenly Converſation* doth conſiſt, that we may be ſure not to Apoſtatize, nor do any thing unworthy of ſo Heavenly a Nature.

1. This *Heavenly Converſation* doth very well conſiſt with, or rather includes in it a due Religious Uſe of this World's Goods, and can make its Advantage, without any Prejudice to it ſelf, of the ſeveral Accommodations this Earth doth afford.

It was long ſince determined by that Sect of *Philoſophy* which ſhewed ſufficiently their Contempt of Riches, That the Goods of Fortune were very convenient for their *Wiſe* and Virtuous Man, as bringing great Aſſiſtance; and without which ſome parts of an entire Vertue would be poor and lame, and could ſcarce be brought into Exerciſe. *Epictetus* was an excellent Man, tho' poor and deſpiſed: If he had been rich, and in the midſt of his Greatneſs maintained

tained the ſame Generoſity of Mind, the indigent World would have been ſo much the better for him, as Riches and Virtue are not always found united in the ſame Perſon. God made the Delights of Paradiſe, the Garden of *Eden*, for Man in the State of Innocence: He firſt created this World, and furniſhed it with all the Varieties of Pleaſure it doth contain, as a ſtately Palace to receive him, before he breathed into him the Breath of Life. And that fallen State, wherein we are involved, is ſo far from bereaving us of any Liberty allowed him, that after the Flood God enlarged Man's Commiſſion, and gave him the Beaſts of the Field for Meat, which before it was not lawful to touch, only for Sacrifices to himſelf. Ambition is too oft the great Diſturbance of the World, yet is it not the neceſſary Nature of this Paſſion to boil up into a Diſeaſe, only the Exceſs of it is dangerous; which, as in other Paſſions, it is the Work of a rational Virtue to correct: For it hath a Warmth in it, which when fixed on a right Object, is neceſſary for every vertuous Breaſt. *Ipſa vitium, frequenter tamen cauſa virtutum:* Tho' it be com-

Serm. 1.

monly eſteemed a Vice, yet is it often
Serm. 1. a Cauſe of Vertue. Ἄειν δειπνεῖν, καὶ ὑπερέχειν ἔμμεναι ἄλλων. *Heſiod* adviſes to invite our Friends to a Feaſt, and to ſuffer our Enemies to come. So a Wiſe Chriſtian will be earneſt and ſollicitous after the Acquiſition of Vertue; and if Riches alſo come, he thinks not himſelf bound to turn them away. That which good Men call Contentedneſs, is not always free from Lazineſs, often mixed with too great a Love of their own Eaſe and Quiet, being unwilling to diſturb that Pleaſure which they take in their ſilent Retirements. Some have, by great Miſtake of Religion, confined themſelves to Woods and Deſarts, where they ſpend their time very little to the Advantage of the World, the Good and Intereſt of which every Man is bound to promote. Hence came the vainly applauded Titles of *Hermites*, *Anchorites*, *Stylites*, whoſe Practice, if all ſhould imitate, Deſarts would become Cities, and Cities Deſarts. And to what Uſe is a great Example of Virtue, which (like the feigned Fire under the Moon) is wholly inviſible, communicating neither Light nor Heat to the darkned, benumbed World? Is it any part

part of the Skill of a Phyſician to with-draw himſelf, and run from the Fury of the Diſeaſe that hath ſeized the City? Will it make a bad World better, if the beſt Men retire to their Privacies? If he who *converteth a Sinner*, even of the loweſt Condition, *from the Error of his way, ſhall ſave a Soul from Death*; he, who by his Vertuous Example and Wiſe Advice, ſhall turn the Hearts of the Great Ones of the World, from Vice and Irreligion to Goodneſs and Piety, may truly be ſaid to Philoſophize in Publick; and tho' he ſpeak but to one, he reads Lectures of Morality to the whole Country, commonly influenced by high Authority. Chriſtian Religion, in the greateſt Strictneſs of it, gives us leave to uſe the World; and it is a laborious and painful Vertue, in the midſt of all Temptations, keeping it ſelf unſpotted, that ſeems to merit the moſt honourable Rewards. Serm. 1.

It was no hard matter for *Ulyſſes*, being bound, to ſail by the *Sirens*, harmleſs: But to hear the Charmings of Pleaſure, and in the midſt of its Enchantments to preſerve Innocence, is true Greatneſs of Spirit, and more de-

ſerving; as it is to conquer an Enemy,
Serm. 1. than to flee from him.

They do Religion little Service, who repreſent it to the World in ſuch a Dreſs as affrights Men from it, not invites them to it: As if, to be a Chriſtian were to be condemned to the Mines or Gallies, to perpetual Melancholy, a conſtant Slavery, to bid Farewell to all thoſe innocent Pleaſures (which the beſt Men know how beſt to uſe) with out any Equivalent; placing Piety in moroſe Behaviours, antique Geſtures, ignorant Zeal, and unpoliſhed Devotions. So true is the *Jewiſh* Proverb, that *The chief thing which will undo the World, is, a Religious Man who is a Fool.* True Goodneſs deſtroys not, but regulates all our Paſſions, and compoſeth them in the Uſe of this World to the beſt Advantage of our Return to the other. If ſome of thoſe who evaporate their Strength of Mind in their Cloſets, and would ſeparate the Soul from the Body before we be Dead, could be awakened out of that Spiritual Dream, and be perſwaded to be lawfully induſtrious in getting a ſhare in the Government of the World, it would be the moſt ready way to bring down

down Heaven upon Earth, and to make the Kingdom of Chriſt come quickly. Serm. 1.

It was *Epicurus* and his Followers, who having firſt made the Happineſs of their Deities to conſiſt in an ocioſe Eternity, never to be concerned, becauſe never to be engaged in the Government of the World; themſelves imitating thoſe, ῥᾳθυμοτέρους, ſlothful Gods they had made, never interrupted their Eaſineſs of Life with the Thoughts of active Buſineſs, but wrapped themſelves in that Retirement, which, to the true Intereſt of the World, was as unprofitable as their Sleep.

They indeed, who thought the World was well made without Wiſdom, are not farther to be blamed for thinking it might be governed by Folly. But there is Work to be done; and if the Sober, the Wiſe, and the Good, will ever decline it, the Proud, the Raſh, the Ignorant, will aſcend the Chariot; and what the End will be, the Fate of *Phaëton* is not the worſt Inſtance that may inform us: He broke in pieces the Courſe of Nature, made Confuſion in Heaven and Earth, forced the Sun thro' the whole *Zodiac* in one Day; whereby

Serm. I.

whereby he burnt the Earth, that is, refined it into Mountains and Rivers of Gold; but the boundleſs Ambition of ſome we read of, hath brought on the Iron Age, and now we fight and deſtroy one another with ſuch a Fury, ſo deliberate, as if we never intended to give over till whole Mankind be reduced to its primitive Duſt.

2. Tho' we may uſe the things of this World, we muſt be careful to value them no more than they deſerve: For according as our Eſtimation of things is, ſo will be our Love and Affections to them. We ſhall take more Pains to get them, endure more Care and Anxiety to keep them, and part from them with more Grief and Trouble; but if we underſtand their real Nature and Worth, we ſhall wiſely afford them no more of our Heart than they do deſerve. If the *Philoſopher*, in a fond Opinion, had fancied, that the Son whom he had begat was not like other Children, of a Corruptible, Mortal Body, but of a more refined and exalted Nature, he would not have received the Meſſage of his Death with ſo much Patience; but counting that he was Mortal,

Mortal, it was no Surprize that he ſhould Die. Serm. 1.

The falſe Opinion which the vulgar World (far the greateſt part of Mankind) hath ever had of Riches, appears in the Names all the Learned Languages have put upon them; the *Hebrew* עשר, the *Greek* πλοῦτος, the *Latin Res*; as if they were the only ſubſtantial, eſſential, real thing; and all elſe (even Vertue alſo) but Shadows, Accidents, empty Names, Nothing: And in the ſame Language, *Beatus & Dives*, a rich, bleſſed, happy Man, is all one. In our own common Speech Men are *good*, *better*, *beſt*, as they are comparatively *richer* than others. So juſtly did *Cato* of old complain, *Vera rerum nomina amiſimus*, We have loſt the true Names of things. If we ſo truly and unskilfully caſt up the Value of this World, we ſhall leave but little of our Love, Deſires and Endeavours for the other.

We muſt not look upon our Abode here as our fixed and ſettled Habitation, but as a Lodging in our Journey, where (for ought we know) we ſtay but for a Night. We are Strangers and Pilgrims, here have we no *continuing City, but we ſeek one to come.* So Wiſe Men, without

Serm. 1. without Revelation, could diſcourſe of the Pilgrimage of the Soul, how it is now in Exile from its native Country, baniſhed from that State of Happineſs it was created to inhabit. ------- Φυγὰς θεόθεν καὶ ἀλήτης. So that it will be the greateſt Folly to dote upon that as a Palace which was intended for thy Priſon; to humour and pamper our Bodies, is, to fall in Love with our Chains, and applaud the Mud Walls of the Soul's Dungeon. Hath Nature favoured thee with a ſtrong and healthful Conſtitution? believe that thy Soul may ſhortly quit its Lodgings, and take its Flight nearer Home. Haſt thou a fair Houſe, pleaſant Gardens, beautiful Flowers, and Groves, which thine own Hands have planted? it is Folly to ſet thy Heart upon them, ſince within a few Years thou leaveſt all that delightful Habitation, and art no more here. We may recreate our ſelves with the harmleſs Recreations of the Earth; but in vain do we expect Reſt and Eaſe till we arrive at our deſigned Dwelling.

3. *A Heavenly Converſation* implies a Living according to the Laws and Cuſtoms

ſtoms of that Place and Policy thou pretendeſt to be a Member of. Serm. 1.

The eternal Laws of Heaven were made known unto us by the *Son of God*, and ſufficiently manifeſted by his Divine Life and Doctrine.

To be angry and diſcontented that Fortune ſupplies not thy extravagant Deſires, is as ſenſeleſs as if the Priſoner ſhould fret that his Table is not ſpread with delicious Food, or that he lies not on a Bed of Ivory, which none can expect in that Condition. To take ill the Affronts and Indignities, to reſent the Injuries and malicious Contrivances which the World puts upon thee, is as unreaſonable as to rail at the Sun for ſcorching thee under the Torrid Zone, or to fall out with the Froſt for pinching thee under the *Northern* Pole. They both act according to their Natures, as our Saviour hath told us, (St. *John* 15. 19.) *If ye were of the World, the World would love his own; but becauſe ye are not of the World, therefore the World hateth you.*

And one Excellency of the Chriſtian Laws ſeems to be, That they are fitted for our State, deſigned for thoſe who are in the World, but pretend not to be

Serm. I.

be of it. It would be irrational for me to torment my ſelf at the Incivilities I ſhould receive from a Barbarous Nation; to return *Evil for Evil*, requite one Injury with another, is never ſafe in a ſtrange Country: But my beſt Policy would be, I ſhould lay the ſureſt Foundation of my Peace and Security, by putting up Injuries, ſhewing all Signs of civil Behaviour towards thoſe who leaſt deſerve it: Patiently to endure all things, would be my wiſeſt Courſe to accompliſh my Pilgrimage with the greateſt Safety; moſt part of the World being like a Wilderneſs of Wild Beaſts, Reſiſtance will but enrage their Fury, tho' Meekneſs alſo and Humility are too often trodden under Foot.

The great diſtinguiſhing Law of Heaven, is Love, which enlightens the whole Hemiſphere of the Cœleſtial Kingdom, and makes the Earth below become habitable: *By this ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another.* In the beginning of Chriſtianity, when a Chriſtian was ſcarce perceivable amongſt the Multitude of Heathens, yet were they taken notice of by this Character; *See how they love one another.* As times are now, we muſt

muſt either find out another Mark, or conclude there are fewer Chriſtians. Serm. 1.

Every Nation hath ſome Cuſtom, Humour or Faſhion peculiar to its ſelf, by which it is eaſy to diſtinguiſh a Foreigner from a true Native. Shew thy ſelf *(O Chriſtian)* whence thou cameſt, and whither thou tendeſt by keeping cloſe to the Practice of thy own Country; not faſhioning thy ſelf after the vain Humors of Worldly Men: Take heed leaſt by thy too cordial Converſe with Earth, thou learneſt its Cuſtoms, and forgetting the Language of *Canaan*, thou ſpeakeſt the Language of *Sin*; thy Liſping *Sibboleth* will betray thee.

The Cuſtoms of this World are as ridiculous to a ſober Chriſtian, as it would make any of us to ſmile at the Wild *Indian*, to ſee how he Paints himſelf with Juices of Herbs, and thinks himſelf brave, with Skins of Beaſts, and Bracelets of neglected Stones. He wonders to ſee Men proud of Gold and Silver, gay Cloaths, or rich Enjoyments, which reſpect the Man but at a ſecond or third hand; are but unneceſſary Appendices to the Body, which is but the Inſtrument of the Soul. What a ſtrange People (thinks he) is this, who prefer this

Serm. 1. this Earth before Heaven, their Bodies before their Souls, Riches and Pleaſures before God, a few Days, a Moment of Time before Eternity; which they pretend to believe! He bleſſes himſelf to ſee the antique Geſtures, uncouth Behaviour, the unprofitable Labour, the vexatious Pleaſures, the nauſeating Delights, the pitiful Deſigns, the unpolitick Prudence, the fooliſh Wiſdom of the Worldly Man: He wonders at his earneſt Purſuit after Honour and Riches, winged things that flee away or ſtay but for a Moment. He will be ſure carefully to avoid theſe Extravagancies; and to that purpoſe keeps himſelf cloſe to the Laws of his own Kingdom, which are truly ſtiled, *Everlaſting Righteouſneſs.*

4. *A Heavenly Converſation* conſiſts in promoting the Intereſt of that Kingdom. Since we have all, in our Baptiſm, ſwore Allegiance to the King of Heaven, promiſing to wage an eternal War with all the Enemies of this Kingdom; we muſt be ſure to make no Peace or Truce, nor do any thing that may not, in ſome degree, ſerve to the eſtabliſhing of Chriſt's Throne, the ſubduing

duing of his Enemies, and the encreaſing the Number of his faithful Subjects. Let him reign firſt in our own Souls, and then uſe all our Induſtry to bring others to the Acknowledgment of his Government. And this we ſhall beſt do by obſerving theſe two Rules. Serm. 1.

1. Be ſure to make a true Repreſentation of that God you invite Men to ſerve; whereby they will eaſily be allured into his Obedience.

If they ſhall ask (as *Pharaoh* once did) who or what he is? anſwer them in St. *John*'s Words, *God is Love*; that he is the *Prince of Peace*, his Kingdom conſiſts in *Righteouſneſs and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*; that he gave his Life to Redeem his rebellious Subjects from a ſevere Thraldom they had enſlaved themſelves into. That the Rule of his Actions is not (as ſome deſcribe it) his irreſiſtible Power, unbounded Soveraignity; but the ſame Meaſures which he obliges us to obſerve, even the eternal Rules of *Truth, Juſtice and Goodneſs*. Tell the World, that he is no tyrannical, unmerciful Prince, he thirſts after no Man's Blood, but would have all Men attain to that Salvation, which

with a great Price he hath purchaſed.

Serm. 1. Labour to undeceive the World of thoſe falſe Prejudices they have entertained of this God, That there is no ſuch God as they have made, only in their own diſturbed Imaginations. That he hath made no ſuch *abſolute* Decrees of the Damnation of innumerable Souls, nor intends to build his Glory upon the eternal Ruin of his innocent Creatures. That he really hates all Sin; therefore hath not decreed it. That he is moſt ſincere in his Invitations to Obedience and Happineſs; therefore hath not two Wills contradictory one to the other, a ſort of Treachery which the Heathens did abominate, and is fooliſhly joined with Omnipotence, which cannot want it: Almighty Power needs no deluſive Tricks of Policy to carry on its Deſigns.

A Wiſe Heathen (*Hierocles*) writ a Book, *De uſu Deorum*, Of the infinite Advantage the Exiſtence and Belief of a God was to Mankind: Shewing what a ſure Foundation it is of Peace and Tranquility of Mind, to reſign up our ſelves to his Wiſdom, to imitate his Divine Excellencies, to rely upon his Promiſes, to fear his Juſtice, to hope in

in his Mercy, and firmly to expect his Reward. But if he had believed God to be ſuch a Being as by ſome he hath been moſt injuriouſly repreſented, arbitrary, falſe, cruel and malicious, he would have changed the Deſign of his Diſcourſe, and eaſily demonſtrated, That the Belief of ſuch a God could tend to nothing but the utter rooting out of all Vertue and Goodneſs from amongſt Men, the Encouragement and Protection of all Vice and Wickedneſs from ſo great an Example, the Deſtruction both of the intellectual and material World. Set before all Men ſuch a Picture of him, as thou findeſt drawn by himſelf in his Holy Word. Serm. 1.

2. Perſwade the World of the Reaſonableneſs and Advantageouſneſs of the Laws he hath impoſed upon his Subjects. Bid them firſt try whether his *Yoke be not eaſy*, before they accuſe it as inſupportable: Aſſure them, that they ſhall be obliged to nothing but what is moſt ſuitable to, and improving of their Spiritual Powers: Appeal to any, who will be guided either by Reaſon or Experience, whether Obedience to his Laws be not moſt for the Good

of the World, and every particular
Serm. 1. Perſon. That they are ſo righteous and profitable, that (tho' there were no State after this Life) Mankind could not contrive any thing better for its preſent Happineſs, than to live in the moſt ſtrict Obſervation of them. So they bring naturally here their Reward with them, beſides the infinite Rewards hereafter.

Shew the vain and ſottiſh World how it is deluded and kept in Slavery by the Enemy of Mankind, who ſports himſelf at our Miſeries, and we know it not. Tell them, that the Pleaſures they think they feel, are falſe, imaginary, momentary, unworthy, utterly deſtructive: That true, ſolid, unſpotted, durable, eternal Pleaſures, are no where to be found but in the Exerciſe of Vertue, Piety and Devotion. Laſtly, aſſure them, that whatever Stories have been told of the Impoſſibility to keep the Laws of thy God, they are all falſe, injurious, and full of Blaſphemy. If there be Difficulties, thy Vertue will be more excellent and illuſtrious. Do any of the Saints now with God, complain that he was a hard Maſter? Doth the noble Army of Martyrs

now

now think they ſuffered too great Torments to attain their Happineſs? Surely Heaven is an exuberant Reward. Thy righteous, moſt benign Lord and Maſter never did, never will impoſe any thing which he will not enable his willing Subjects to perform. Serm. 1.

5. *A Heavenly Converſation* implies a frequent thinking and meditating upon Heaven: If we believe our *Treaſure to be there, our Hearts will be there alſo.*

As it is in this Earth; tho' no Man ever travelled under the Poles to bring us Word what is in thoſe places, yet is it demonſtrable from the Nature of the Globe, that there muſt be Land or Sea as in other places, elſe the Figure would not be circular. So may we (tho' we were deſtitute of Revelation) as aſſuredly conclude, that there muſt be a future State of Rewards and Puniſhments; otherwiſe the *intellectual Syſtem* would remain imperfect, the Juſtice of God could not be cleared. And if *Aſtronomers* have multiplied Heavens as they fancied would beſt explain the Motions of inferiour Planets; much better may natural Reaſon aſſert one Heaven, without which the Varieties in the Orbs of

Providence, Divine Diſpenſations, can-
Serm. 1. not be reſolved; but we have a more ſure Word of Propheſy.

Ulyſſes in his long Abſence from his Country, twenty Years ſpent in Wars, Storms and Shipwracks, how did the Thoughts of his little *Ithaca* (an Iſland ſixty Miles in Compaſs, whereof he was King) ſupport and refreſh him! What more delicious Object canſt thou have to think upon than the Happineſs good Men ſhall enjoy! What a Scene, what a Proſpect it is into Eternity! Methinks it ſhould poſſeſs thy whole Mind, that this World ſhould have but little room there.

In Proſperity, the Thoughts of this would ſecure thee againſt the Temptations of Pleaſure. In Adverſities, it would bear up thy Spirit, and fill thee with courageous Reſolutions. Lift up thine Eyes, and behold yonder ſpacious Regions of Light, where innumerable Suns quite baniſh Darkneſs: There are no Clouds, no foggy Vapours, but pure *Æther* enlivened with everlaſting Day. There are no Sighs, no Tears, no Oppreſſions, no Injuries. That is thy Country whither thou art going, where all the Affronts, and unpleaſing Occur-

Occurrences of this Life ſhall be drown-
ed and forgotten in endleſs Pleaſures. Serm. 1.
It would be fooliſh Preſumption to attempt a Deſcription of this Heavenly Country; it is not to be fetterred in *Climes and Parallells:* Believe it as it is ſpoken of in Holy Scripture, and thou wilt find Object enough for the moſt rapturous Contemplation.

6. *Laſtly*, It conſiſts in a due Preparation of thy ſelf for it, and a conſtant Expectation of thy entring into it, by ſtrong, impregnable Habits of Vertue, and inherent Righteouſneſs; in a true Faith, that all thy Imperfections will be ſupplied by the Merits of thy Saviour, and thy Sincerity accepted for his ſake. Purge thy Mind from all black Paſſions, Envy, Hatred and Malice; fill thy pious Breaſt with an univerſal Love, and diffuſed Charity to all Mankind.

That Precept of the *Pythagorians*, ἁπλωσον σεαυτὸν, ſimplify thy ſelf, reduce thy ſelf to one. How Wiſe! how Holy! how True it is! What a ſure Foundation of Life, Liberty, Peace and Happineſs! to put off the Old Man, with all its Impediments, Incumbrances,

Serm. 1.

in ſo neceſſary a Journey. Lay aſide all hurtful Inclinations and Affections to this Earth: For tell me thou who haſt wandered up and down this World, haſt ſeen its Vanities, and felt its Injuries, haſt tried all its Pretenſions, art ſenſible of its Boaſtings, and Emptineſs, art thou not weary? doſt thou not think long to be at home, in thy Father's Houſe? Hearken to the Moanings of that Spiritual Being within thee, how it pants and breathes, how uneaſy and reſtleſs it is? willing and deſirous to lay aſide the Burden of this Body, which bears it down in its Flight upwards: It would fain now retire and lie down in Beds of everlaſting Reſt, and ſpend Eternity in Immortal Converſation.

But in the mean while be ſure thou miſtakeſt not, thinking that Heaven is altogether without thee; like the *Elyſian* Fields, or *Adonis*'s Gardens, all Poetical; that we muſt be beholden to the Circumſtance of Place for a Sight of God, as we ſay, We will go to Court to ſee the King. Heaven muſt begin in thine own Soul, by the acquiring of Juſtice, Temperance, Charity, Purity, and all other Chriſtian Graces, which

which thou muſt be well ſtored with in thy Journey homeward. Serm. 1.

When *Priam*'s little Son (in *Lucian*) came to Heaven, he preſently called for Milk and Cheeſe; ſuch Fare as he was wont to have in his Father's Court. It is a Childiſh Fancy to imagine, that things in Heaven are like things on Earth; that there we ſhall find wherewith to gratify our fleſhly Appetites. *Homer*'s Gods neither eat Bread, nor drink Wine. A ſtrong Argument why we ſhould in this Life mortify thoſe Deſires which in Heaven will find no Objects to entertain them; and be conſtant, very diligent in thoſe Spiritual Exerciſes which muſt be the Employment of our Souls to all Eternity.

The End of the Firſt Sermon.

SERMON II.

St. John I. 4.

In him was Life, and that Life was the Light of Men.

THIS Evangeliſt having (in the Words immediately before) briefly and poſſitively declared the Divinity of our Saviour, That the *Word was God*; doth not proceed to explain the Particulars of that Myſtery, or to render Infinity comprehenſible to finite Underſtandings; but in the Text, to inform us of what we are moſt concern'd to know, The great Advantages which the World received from that Appearance. From the Words I ſhall diſcourſe two things.

I. The clear and certain Revelation of Immortality, and eternal Life by our Saviour. *In him was Life.*

II. The

Serm. I. II. The Uſefulneſs and Efficacy of this Revelation to Mankind, *That Life was the Light of Men.*

1. He that ſhall conſider the great darkneſs wherein the whole World was benighted, with reference to a future State, before the Manifeſtation of our Saviour, will eaſily conclude with the Apoſtle, That it was *Chriſt who brought Life and Immortality to Light by the Goſpel.* Amongſt the moſt refined Wits of the *Gentile* World we meet with ſuch obſcurity of Diſcourſes, ſo weak Reaſonings, dubious Reſolutions, and inconſtant Determinations, as clearly diſcover the great incertainty they were under; when at any time they go about to make demonſtration of the Souls exiſtence after Death, they uſe ſuch Intricate Methods, ſuch Ænigmatical Terms, Ill Conſequences, and Precarious Philoſophy, that all a ſerious Enquirer can gather from their moſt Elaborate Eſſays is, That they had rather a true deſire to believe it, then that they did actually believe it, and that they were conſcious that they had not created that Faith in themſelves which they endeavoured to beget in others; not that it is impoſſible

ble by the Light of Nature and true Reaſon to arrive at a Satisfaction in this important Article of our Belief, but that it muſt be done by thoſe means which the feebleneſs of Mans Underſtanding, by the corruption of our Natures, and the obſtinacy of Prejudices, hardly will admit; ſome are ſo far ſunk in the Pleaſures of the Body, that they are not able to frame any apprehenſions of the Soul, others are ſo much in love, and reſt ſo ſatisfied with the Voluptuous Enjoyments of the preſent World, that they deſire nothing of a more pure and refined Nature than the good things they are already poſſeſſed of, whence their Notions of a future State were generally groſs and carnal, not much raiſed above what this Earth might afford, as if Heaven were deſigned for the Gratification of our Senſes, where ſhould be all the Pleaſure without any of that Pain or Trouble which here do naturally flow from ſuch Exceſſes. Serm. 2.

Certainly the ſame Fate ſeems to have attended the Belief of an Immortality as of many other Truths, it hath had its growth and decay, been entertained, or neglected, according to the prevailing Humor in diverſity of Times.

1. In

Serm. 2. 1. In the Simplicity of *Gentile* Antiquity it flouriſhed without any Contradiction, or Diſpute, as appears from the *Ægyptian Theology*, from which *Orpheus* compoſed his, and from innumerable places in *Homer*, eſpecially his νεκυομαντία, the Relation of *Ulyſſes* his Deſcent into Hell, and the Diſcourſe he had with the Souls of deceaſed Hero's; in the beginning of his Poem he clearly diſtinguiſheth betwixt thoſe ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς, *thoſe Valiant Souls*, which the War ſent to Hell, and their Bodies, which ἑλώρια τοῖσι κύνεσσι, were devoured by Beaſts and Fowls; they all diſcovered the ſtrong Preſage they had, by the Hypotheſes they laid down, whereon to build an Immortality, ſome patched up the eternal duration of the Soul with endleſs *Tranſmigrations* out of one Body into another, and when the Bodies of Men and Beaſts ſhould fail, *Empedocles* ſent it to inform the Plants and Trees, and at laſt to return into its own Body, and ſo to move in that κύκλῳ ἀνάγκης, *Circle of Matter* to all Eternity; ſome fancy that at Death it was ſwallowed up into the *Soul of the World*, or returned into the Divine Eſſence, (of which they thought it a part) ſo ſurely providing for

for its Exiſtence everlaſting; laſtly, o- Serm. 2.
thers taught, That the Souls of their *Hero's*, leaving their Bodies, were changed into Stars, or took up their Habitations in the Moon, that they might not be wholly excluded Heaven, but partake of its ſuppoſed Incorruptibility. *Hades*, Hell in *Homer*, as alſo in moſt of the Ancient Fathers, contains both *Elyſium* and *Tartara*, it is the common Receptacle both of good and bad Souls, where thoſe are Happy, theſe Miſerable; nor was this the Belief only of a few private Contemplative Perſons, but it was the Foundation of all the publick Offices of their Religion; their Puriſications and Initiations were intended and ſuppoſed to cleanſe the Soul from all Contagion of this World, to make it more Happy in the next; many of the Gods they Worſhipped were Men guilty of great Crimes, ſubmitted to all the Ceremonies of their Expiations, and with much Solemnity they pacified the Souls of the deceaſed whom they had injured, ſuch was the ſettled Perſwaſion of thoſe Ages, (without doubt received from the *Jews* in *Egypt*, and brought into *Greece* by the great Induſtry of their Wiſeſt Men) until *Epicurus* aroſe, who,

(by

Serm. 2. (by a true computation) will be found the first in the World who pretended Reason and Philosophy against the Immortality of the Soul, and reduced the foolish Thoughts of a few Immoral Men into a *System* of Absurdities and Irreligion; his Impiety was by the *Greeks* in *Alexander*'s Conquests, carried amongst the *Jews*, where in a little time it produced the Heresie of the *Sadduces*, denying Spirits and a Resurrection, and this is the true *Origen* of that Sect; it was an ill Requital for the Doctrine of Immortality from them received: thus he Reigned in his Kingdom of *Atoms*, and, notwithstanding the Opposition made by the *Academy*, enlarged, or maintained his Empire to the coming of Christ; when God, to give the most illustrious Testimony of his Care and Pity to the degenerate State of Mankind, and to convince them that he did not sit included in fictitious intermundane Spaces, unconcerned in the Government of the World, appeared upon Earth, *A Light to lighten the Gentiles*, and all the Phantasms of Darkness fled before him.

2. As to the *Jews* these things seem to be clear.

1. That

1. That Eternal Life was not a Promiſe of that Covenant, and that the Sanction of their Law was only Temporal Rewards and Puniſhments. St. *Auguſtin* ſaith, The Kingdom of Heaven promiſed in the Goſpel, is not named in the *Old Teſtament*; and St. *Chryſoſtom* urgeth, That if the Saints in the Old Teſtament attained ſuch degrees of Virtue when the Reſurrection was not Preached, we under the Goſpel are bound to greater Perfection; and it was an Article againſt *Pelagius* in the *Paleſtine Synod*, That he held the Kingdom of Heaven was promiſed in the Old Teſtament, as a diminution to the Grace of the Goſpel; the 28th. Chapter of *Deuteronomy* is a recital of thoſe Bleſſings *Temporal*, promiſed to the Obedience of their Law, and the Curſe denounced to Diſobedience; the *Jews* interpret the Promiſe annexed to the fifth Commandment, of the continuance of their Common Wealth in the Land of *Canaan*, not to be carried into any Captivity. Serm. 2.

2. It muſt be acknowledged, That when the Belief of a future State, which muſt be ſuppoſed to all Religion, grew

weak by the prevailing Vices of Men,
Serm. 2. ſome Good and Holy Perſons received aſſurances of it by extraordinary ways, additions to the Light of Nature.

It was believed, both by *Jew* and *Gentile*, that the Death with Confeſſion of a Malefactor did expiate all the Sins of his Life, freed him from Puniſhment in the other World. St. *Paul* (*Acts* 26. 6.) tells *Agrippa*, *I ſtand, and am judged for the hope of the Promiſe made unto our Fathers, unto which Promiſe our Twelve Tribes inſtantly ſerving God hope to come.* *Martha* (John 11. 24.) *knew that her Brother ſhould riſe again in the Reſurrection at the laſt day.* There were moreover Texts in the Old Teſtament from which a Reſurrection might be proved. Our Saviour (*Mat.* 26. 21.) from Gods ſaying, *I am the God of* Abraham, *the God of* Iſaac, *and the God of* Jacob, concludes the Reſurrection, the ſtrength of which Argument ſome *Rabbins* have ſince acknowledged, and made uſe of; and it being ſaid, that when the *Multitude heard it they were aſtoniſhed at his Doctrine*, it is a ſign the Argumentation was new, and never had been propoſed by the *Phariſees*.

Yet

Yet if we conſider the great Diviſi-
ons concerning this Article amongſt the Serm. 2.
Jewiſh Doctors, under the Authorities of two of their moſt Learned *Rabbies*, we can conclude nothing leſs than their uncertainty in the Matter, ſince *Maimonides* himſelf, who Compoſed their Creed, is accuſed by his Adverſary totally to have denied it, at leaſt plainly to have aſſerted the annihilation of the Souls of the Wicked.

There are indeed many dark Repreſentations of a Reſurrection in the Prophets, which had no further impreſſion upon the Minds of the vulgar, than to ſignifie a reſtauration from ſome Temporal Calamity, only in the Times of the *Maccabees* God was pleaſed to give clearer Evidences, to ſupport the Spirits of good Men under the Extremity of their Perſecutions.

3. Laſtly, It is certain that in our Saviours time, and throughout the *Acts* of the Apoſtles, the Sect of the *Sadducees* was the ruling part of the Nation, againſt which there was no Oppoſition made, no Cenſure inflicted, only each Party Diſputed againſt the other.

Serm. 2. So that on the part of the *Gentile* World they had a hard Task to make any conſiderable Improvement in true Goodneſs, their beſt Encouragement being, That Virtue was a ſufficient Reward to it ſelf, a Principle too weak to promote the Mind in difficult and elaborate Sanctity; and the *Jews* generally reſted ſatisfied with the Promiſes of Earthly Happineſs, ambitious of nothing more than Everlaſting Dominion in this World; this was the Darkneſs in which Mankind ſearched after Happineſs, a Darkneſs which nothing leſs than the appearance of the true Light could diſpel, and this our Saviour did, 1. by his Doctrine, 2. by his own Reſurrection.

In the Doctrine which he Preached, beſides the particular Diſcourſes applied to the *Jews*, he did conſtantly inſiſt upon thoſe Principles, which by the ſevereſt Rules of Reaſoning will conclude a Life after Death.

1. He often urgeth the diſtinction betwixt the Soul and the Body, *Math.* 10. 28. *Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul; fear him who is able to caſt Body and Soul into*

to Hell Fire; what ſhall a Man give in exchange for his Soul? Serm. 2.

That Man is not meerly this well formed Earth we call the Body, ſubject to our Senſes, which we feel and ſee to continue a few Years under the Sun, and at length fall Sick and Die, and return to Duſt, but that this viſible *Machin* is acted by a far more Noble Principle, of a different and more refined Nature, is the Foundation of all our Moral Actions in this Life, and our Hopes in a future; for he who believes there is no ſuch part of a Man as a Spirit, the Perfection of whoſe Nature ſecures it from all fear of Corruption or Diſſolution, muſt believe that the Death of the Body is the end of Man, and when that is laid in the Grave he ceaſeth to exiſt, and there ſhall be no more remembrance of him; our Saviour therefore proceeds in the moſt exact Philoſophical way to convince them of a future State, by inſtructing them that they were compounded of two different Principles, in the ſeparation of which one from the other conſiſts what we call Death, and tho' one *returns to the Earth, from whence it was taken*, yet the other remains immortal,

Serm. 2. Nor doth our Saviour barely aſſert this Diſtinction, but proves it by the ſame Argument that the greateſt Maſters of Wiſdom have yet been able to invent, from the variety of thoſe Operations, which every one, who attends to his own Mind, doth conſtantly experience. *The Spirit indeed* (ſaith he *Mat.* 26. 41.) *is willing, but the Fleſh is weak.* We find in our ſelves ſomething which can order and diſpoſe the Motions of the Body, a Power which can command, and regulate the Deportment of every Member, which can curb and contradict the Inclinations of Fleſh and Blood, can allay the Violence of Anger, the Impetuoſity of other Paſſions, and make for the Soul a calm and quiet Habitation; if at any time it be ſurprized from the Senſes, it is ſorry for that miſcarriage, and more careful to regain its dominion. Whence can proceed this Eternal Warfare, which every good Man feels in his own Breaſt, but from two different Principles of Body, and ſomething that is not ſo?

By this Argument our Saviour ſeems to contradict and confute that Opinion of ſome in his time, and which is reckoned (by *Gennadius*) amongſt the Eccleſiaſtical

cleſiaſtical Doctrines, That Humane Souls are Material, but Immortal only by *Grace*, or the Divine Power, than which Opinion nothing can more threaten their Immortality; but we know a better Philoſophy, (which *Chriſt* by his Diſcourſe hath confirmed) which will never yield that *Matter*, however Modified can be made capable of Senſe, much leſs of Underſtanding, and can demonſtrate from the Nature of the thing, that it is wholly impoſſible to make a Rational Mind out of meer Matter. Serm. 2.

Thus are we forced to uſe all the *Reaſon* God hath given us, to prove we have any; and to ſhew our ſelves Men, in maintaining, that we are not Stocks or Stones.

2. Our Saviour hath given us Aſſurance of an Immortality in that Doctrine of *Rewards* and *Puniſhments* after Death, which he Preached. He hath clearly taught Eternal Life and Happineſs, which no Thought can conceive, no Eloquence expreſs, to be the Portion of thoſe who live in Obedience to his Laws; and everlaſting Miſery to thoſe who wilfully and peremptorily

remptorily diſobey them. No Conſe-
Serm. 2. quence can be more natural from the former than this; for if it be certain there is ſomething in us which ſhall not die with the Body, but in its own Nature is diſpoſed to endleſs Life; that Life muſt needs ſpend its ſelf either in Happineſs or Miſery, Pain or Pleaſure, Satisfaction or Diſcontent: And thoſe Men talk fondly who diſpute the Truth of thoſe Puniſhments, becauſe they underſtand not the manner they are inflicted; ſince there is ſcarce the leaſt Appearance in whole Nature, of which even the moſt contriving Philoſopher can give an indiſputable Account. If there be nothing in this Doctrine, which is not highly reconcileable both to the Goodneſs and Juſtice of God, we are bound to acknowledge the Truth of the Revelation. But what is more conſonant to, and declarative of his Goodneſs, and of that ſincere Love which he bears unto his Creatures, than to oblige them by the ſtrongeſt Arguments imaginable to proſecute their own Happineſs in the Obſervation of his Laws? Is it not reaſonable, that God ſhould have greater Right to our Obedience than any Mortal Man? but

if

if he could inflict no greater Puniſh-
ments, nor confer any greater Rewards Serm. 2.
than upon the Body only, (ſince all the World is moved by Hope and Fear) what Security could God have, that his Commands ſhall be obeyed before the Commands of an Earthly Prince, in whoſe Power likewiſe it is to kill the Body? Since Mens Commands are often unjuſt, but God's ever righteous, is it not Reaſon to believe, that he can do us more Good or Hurt than any Man, that ſo we may find our ſelves obliged in ſtronger Bonds to ſerve him in order to our own Happineſs? So that no Body, I ſuppoſe, will blame God for his Deſigns to make us all happy; which he could no otherwiſe effect, but by our Obedience to his Laws. Nor ſhould we give that Obedience to his Laws, if we did not believe him able to reward and puniſh us more than any Mortal Man. His Power therefore muſt extend to the Puniſhment not of the Body only, but alſo of the Soul; not confined to this Life, but continued to the other, where all Earthly Power ceaſeth, and cannot reach. Without which Belief, at what rate would God be ſerved, ſeeing he is ſo

ill

Serm. 2. will obeyed with it? Whence it follows, that the Denunciation of future Puniſhments in the *Doctrine of Chriſt* prove an *Immortality*, nor in the leaſt contradict, but magnify the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of God.

2. Our Saviour hath given us ſtrong Aſſurance of Immortality by his own *Reſurrection*.

He was the firſt of them that ſhall riſe again to Eternal Life; and by ſo miraculous a Return, he confounded the Expectation of his Enemies, and ſtrengthened the *wavering Faith* of his Friends. The *Jews* thought, that however great things he talked in his Life, yet after they had Murdered him, and laid him in the Grave, he would die like other Men, and all his *Thoughts periſh with him*.

Thus they reaſoned, and thus they *erred, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the Power of God*. For when God raiſed him from *the Dead*, and his Death was glorified in his Reſurrection; it was not only a mighty Argument to convince them of their Folly, in endeavouring to deſtroy him whom God was reſolved to *make alive*; but alſo a Demon-

Demonſtration that Righteouſneſs is Immortal; that notwithſtanding all the malicious Contrivances, wherewith true Vertue hath always been perſecuted, yet ſhall it certainly at laſt obtain the Victory, and triumph over all its *Enemies*, even Death it ſelf, in a glorious Immortality. So powerful was the Influence of Chriſt's *Reſurrection*, that to aſſure us what it ſignified, the *Graves were opened, and many of thoſe* who had been long dead, appeared upon Earth, and walked *in the Holy City*. For (as the ancient *Fathers* have obſerved) the Devil forfeited that Right which he had of detaining Sinners in the Grave, by impriſoning ſo innocent a Perſon as was the *Holy Jeſus*: And that Right devolving to our Saviour, Chriſtians can have no greater Security, that they being Members, ſhall likewiſe riſe, as *Chriſt* their Head is riſen. So that whether we conſider the Truth of him, who is the Author of the Revelation of an Immortality, or the Reaſons by which he hath confirmed it, or the Matter of Fact of his own Reſurrection, with the Conſequences that eaſily flow from it, we muſt conclude, That he hath given the greateſt Aſſurance to the World

Serm. 2.

Serm. 2. World of a future State in an Eternal Life after Death. *In him was Life.*

II. I proceed to ſhew the great Uſefulneſs and Efficacy of this Revelation to Mankind, expreſſed in the ſecond part of the Text, *And that Life was the Light of Men.* Wherein we ſhall ſee what Influence the Doctrine of Immortality hath both upon our Underſtandings and our Wills, the ſpeculative and the practical parts of our Lives.

1. It doth enlighten our Underſtandings.

There are ſeveral Contemplations, the very Foundation of Human Life, of which we can give no Account in Reaſon, but upon Suppoſition of a future State: And all our Diſcourſes about them, are vain and idle Fancies, if there be no other Life but this. For,

1. *Firſt*, We can give no Account of *Providence* in the World, but upon this Belief: And if there be no *Providence*, it matters not much to us whether there be a *God*.

The ſeemingly unequal Diſtribution of Good and Evil, is a *Problem* which all

all the Wit of Heatheniſm was never able to reſolve. Both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to denote the Obſcurity of Providence, fancied God to dwell in thick Darkneſs, and Clouds round about him, according to that of *Orpheus*, ἀυ∫όν δ' ἐχεσέφω, πεεί γαρ νέφ@ ἐσήεικ∫αι. *I cannot ſee him incompaſſed with a Cloud.* The Goſpel tells us, *God is Light*; but it is Light inacceſſible. Great Darkneſs and great Light do both equally overpower the Weakneſs of Mortal Senſe; we cannot without Revelation penetrate them. Serm. 2.

There is *Maaſeh Mercabe*, *Opus quadrigæ*, (*Ezek. c.* 1.) *a Work of myſterious Providence*, (which the *Jews* permit none to read but who are come to their Age of Underſtanding) a Wheel within a Wheel, Appearances as intricate and *excentrick* as the Motions of the Heavenly Bodies, to whoſe *Orbs Ezekiel* is ſuppoſed to allude. One great part of Happineſs in Heaven will be, that we ſhall have right Notions of things, which will ceaſe our Doubtings, ſatisfy all our Scruples which on Earth ariſe from falſe, diſtracted Apprehenſions: The Soul there will be, ὅλ@ ὀφθαλμ@, All Eye, as *Ploting* expreſſeth it. In this

this World we muſt admire Providence,
Serm. 2. tho' we do not, we cannot underſtand the Reaſons of its Proceedings; in Heaven bleſſed Souls do acquieſce, becauſe they do ſee them clearly. In *Homer* the Gods have a Language to themſelves, and call things by other Names than Mortals do.

Χάλκιδα κικλήσκουσι θεοὶ, ἄνδρες δ' κυμίνδιν, the Bird we call an *Owle*, and have made it a Word of Reproach, is called by a better Name by them, and committed to the Protection of the wiſeſt *Goddeſs*. If any Providence croſs our Expectations, we are apt to nickname and defame it by ſome Word of Diſparagement, when to thoſe above, and God himſelf, it is moſt wiſe, righteous and honourable. The meaning is, *God's Thoughts are not as our Thoughts, nor his Ways as our Ways.*

Why the beſt Men have the leaſt ſhare of Honour, Riches and Earthly Proſperity, with other the comfortable Gifts of Fortune, whereof the moſt wicked have the greateſt! To ſee the voluptuous and ſenſual Man wallow and grow old in all the Pleaſures a bad Mind can covet, *flouriſhing like a green Bay-Tree*, even in its Verdure and happy

State;

State; whilſt the Good and Righteous labour under the Preſſures of Poverty, Diſhonour and Contempt. Can we think that Providence juſt, which ſeems purpoſely to provide Supplies for the unreaſonable Cravings of extravagant Nature, but feeds the ſober and pious Soul with nothing but its own Tears, and the Bread of Affliction? Why doth the rich Man live voluptuouſly every Day, abound with Gold and Silver, of which he makes no other Uſe but to ſatisfy his brutal Appetite, Good *Lazarus* in vain deſiring the *Crums that fall from his Table?* Why are the Great *Potentates* of the Earth confirmed in that Authority, which enables them to oppreſs the Poor, and trample the Humble and Meek under their Feet? Surely there could be no Anſwer to theſe and the like Demands, if after this Life there were no other State, wherein the Juſtice of God ſhall be manifeſted. But God will approve himſelf a moſt righteous Being, and to diſpoſe of all things in the greateſt Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Equity. There therefore muſt be another Scene, wherein every Man ſhall receive according to his Deeds done here. It was a Saying

of

of St. *Paul*, preſerved by Tradition, *If*
Serm. 2. *God be juſt, the Soul muſt be Immortal.*

Wiſe and true are thoſe Solutions which *Plutarch* and other inquiſitive Men have given to vindicate Providence in this particular, *Why doth God forbear the Wicked?* To propound the Example of his Goodneſs for their imitation, to give them time to become better.

Why doth he afflict the Virtuous? To exerciſe and corroborate their Virtue; to diſcover the indifferency of all Earthly Goods; that they might be Examples of Patience and Conſtancy: yet none of theſe have any ſtrength for Satisfaction, but upon ſuppoſition of another Life; for what Inducement have I to imitate God in his Patience, if there be no Reward here nor hereafter? What Advantage will it be to become better? Why ſhould I by my Miſery teach others Wiſdom? To what Purpoſe exerciſe Virtue, if no Recompenſe hereafter? Why ſhould not I Love this World, if there be not another more deſerving my Affection? But if with the *Pſalmiſt ye enter into this Sanctuary*, all Clouds of doubting diſappear; there is a World of Diſtribution; there you ſhall ſee *Lazarus* in *Abraham's Boſom*, and the Rich Man

Man in *Torments*; there you will be convinced that it is dangerous to have *received our good things in this Life*; that all the Afflictions good Men endure are *not to be compared to the Glory there revealed*; nor will the preſent Proſperity of the Wicked allay but encreaſe their Torments; that we entertain falſe Valuations of the Splendor of this World, calling things good or bad which are not ſo; you will there ſee that Felicity is not always *Cloathed in Purple*; that thoſe we account Happy here, are often Miſerable in the next; you will be ſatisfied that it is good to be Afflicted, that Poverty and Sickneſs curb the intemperate Deſires of Luxury, Ambition, and Pride, and bring back that Senſe of God and Goodneſs, which a vigorous Health and proſperous State are too apt to ſmother. What the *Stoick* ſaid by way of Oſtentation, concerning extremity of Pain, *That whatever he ſhould ſuffer, he would never confeſs it to be an Evil*, is true, and capable of a good Interpretation. Serm. 2.

In *Geometry* there are neceſſarily required three Points given to *deſcribe a Circle* which ſhall include them; God doth always *Geometrize*, yet ignorant,

but audacious Man, from one Point,
Serm. 2. one Act of Succeſs, pleaſing or diſpleaſing to him, will pretend to define that *vaſt Circle*, in which Providence moving ought not to be prejudged, till further degrees of its Revolution, (containing not only this, but alſo the Eternal World) do appear; this is a *Paralogiſm* contrary as well to true *Divinity* as *Geometry*.

2. The certainty of an Immortality aſſures our Underſtandings in the reality of Good and Evil. For,

1. No Reaſon can convince that there is any ſuch thing as *Liberty of Will*, if there be not in us a *Principle* diſtinct from the Body; the Nature of Virtue and Vice ſuppoſes that all our Actions flow freely from us, and we are no otherwiſe ſaid to be guilty than by the concurrence of our *Will*; ſo that if we conſiſt of meer Body, all our Motions will be as neceſſary, and cauſed by the ſame external force, whereby the Fire aſcends, or the Stone falls down; and God may as well call the inſenſible *Earth* whereon we ſtand, or the *Air* in which we breath, to a future Account,

as

as he may challenge us for any of our Commiſſions, ſince they will all flow only from the *Mechanical movings of Matter*, and the inevitable Laws of *Fate*; ſo that thoſe Men have been very perniciouſly Ingenious, who baniſhing all Immateriality out of the Univerſe, have taken away all Virtue and Vice, Good and Evil from amongſt Men, and have left neither a *God to judge*, nor Humane *Actions to be judged.* Serm. 2.

2. If there be no Immortality, Virtue and Vice will be mutable and various, as the Wills of the Supream *Magiſtrate*, but Good and Evil are immutable, eternal as the Eſſence of God himſelf, which equally oblige all Mankind, the greateſt *Monarch* as the loweſt Subject; but if it be believed that there is no Judgment to come, wherein God will diſtribute Rewards and Puniſhments by the Laws of Everlaſting Righteouſneſs, there remains nothing, but that there are as many *Gods* as Kings, and the Command of every Supream Power will be the ſole Meaſure of Good and Evil in the World; every Nation will do wiſely to offer up their Religion to the diſpoſal of the moſt irreſiſtable *Syſtem* of A-

toms upon Earth, as the Politick *Ephe-*
Serm. 2. *ſians* did their Great *Diana* in Marriage to the Conquering *Antonius*.

So that without this Belief of Immortality, all Diſcourſe of God, Providence, Virtue, Vice, whole Morality, will be impertinent, neither prove it ſelf, nor any other Diſquiſition.

3. This Light will direct and give us good Satisfaction in an Enquiry, the Reſolution whereof ſeems nearly to affect the preſent Diſcourſe.

How doth the Humane *Soul* attain Knowledge? Are there any *Idæas*, Exemplars of things connate Coæral with its Exiſtence, by the help of which, as of indubitable Principles, it improves it ſelf, and advances all future Ratiocinations? Or doth it receive from the Corporeal Senſes all the Subjects of its moſt purified Operations?

It is neceſſary that we entertain ſuch a Conception of the Nature of the Soul as may not in the leaſt prejudice its *Immateriality*, which too great a dependance upon the Body apparently doth, all the Arguments againſt it are drawn from that *Topick*; it is more reaſonable to frame our Conception from the State

of

of ſeparation from the Body than whilſt in it; if it act after Death, the *Idæas* which it is furniſhed with muſt be conveyed in a manner as different as the Body it ſhall then have is from this; if the Impreſſions in this Life received, remain in the Soul without the Body, why may there not be ſuch at or before its Union to it? It muſt be a very dull Lethargick Being not able to exert any Operation but by aſſiſtance from the Body; all muſt acknowledge *Idæas* in the Divine Intellect, elſe it would be no *Intellect*, which, becauſe God is Eternal, they muſt be ſo too; the Soul alſo, tho' finite, muſt be endowed with all Advantages to act according to its Rational Nature, for a meer Capacity of Reaſoning can no more fill the *Eſſence* of a Spirit, than a Capacity of Extention make up the Eſſence of a Body. Serm. 2.

We ought to take great heed how we entertain any Opinions which do not magnify but debaſe the Excellent Nature of *Thinking Beings*.

The Opinion which makes us *ſee all things in God* doth indeed well ſecure the *Spirituality* of the Soul, and wiſely commit it to the Inſtitution of the only Omniſcient and *Infallible Maſter*; but

why then are not all Men Infallible?
Serm. 2. Why are not all of one Mind? ſince by the *Hypotheſis* all receive Inſtruction from the Contemplation of the ſame *Idæas*, Eternal Truths in the Divine Eſſence; theſe Priviledges far exceed the State of Humane Nature, they are not Illuminations from the true Light in the Text, but falſe deluſive Lights, *Enthuſiaſm* both Name and Thing.

2. This Revelation is the Light of Men, as it doth direct and encourage our *Will*, the practical part of our Lives.

Infinite are the Offices of Humane Life, which are begot, cheriſhed, and encreaſed from the firm Belief of this *Article* of our Religion, even every part of every Chriſtian Virtue.

For, conſidering the Conſtitution of our Nature, with what Power Senſual Pleaſure triumphs over our Weakneſs, with what Proneneſs we are carried down the Stream of Impiety, how eaſie it is to Sin, and ſpoil the Soul, but difficult, very difficult to obtain or preſerve unblemiſhed Virtue, how much Pain, Trouble, and Induſtry is required to be truly Good; were there not ſome greater Reward propounded than what this World

World can afford, which ſhould infi-
nitely ſatisfy for all the Difficulties of a Serm. 2.
Chriſtian Life, how dull and ſluggiſh ſhould we move in the Paths of Vertue? our Hearts would faint, our Spirits languiſh under ſo heavy a Burden. But if we ſhall duly conſider the Pleaſures of another World, the Felicities of Heaven, how they exceed all the Pain or Pleaſure which here we can either feel or imagine, with what Reſolutions ſhould we find our Souls ennobled! what Strength infuſed to make us conquer the greateſt Difficulties, take Pleaſure in the moſt ingrateful Self-denyals! Eternity! vaſt Eternity! it confounds our Underſtandings, our Thoughts cannot reach it. Before this, the greateſt Pleaſures, and the greateſt Miſeries vaniſh, and are nothing. St. *Paul*'s Afflictions were ſo many, that he profeſſeth he died daily, and was always delivered to Death for *Jeſus*'s ſake: Yet were they all eſteemed but light, *working for him a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.* Faith of another Life, made him with Chearfulneſs undergo the Miſeries of this.

He *reſiſted unto Blood*; *he ran* (1 Cor. 9. 26.) *not uncertainly*: *I fight* (ſaith he)

he) *not as one that beateth the Air.*
Serm. 2. How then bleſſed Apoſtle! *I bring under my Body, if by any means I may attain to the Reſurrection of the Dead.* If the Faith of Chriſtians were anſwerable to the Evidence Chriſt hath given us of eternal Happineſs, what ſhould we not do? what ſhould we not willingly ſuffer, that we might at laſt obtain it? we ſhould not then complain, that his *Commandments are grievous*, or that he hath tyed us to too great Severities of Obedience. Alas! we are too delicate, every thing affrights us, every thing conquers us.

God hath given thee (O Chriſtian!) Spiritual Armour, Weapons of *Warfare*, ſufficient for thy Defence, and thy Victory; *the Shield of Faith, the Helmet of Salvation*, by which the Apoſtle tells thee, the noble Army of Martyrs did, and thou mayſt, *overcome the World.* The Thoughts of Heaven would aſſuredly make us fight valiantly for our Souls. But we cowardly yield our ſelves Captive to every Temptation, every deſpicable Pleaſure conquers us; we make no Reſiſtance at all, not ſo much as take our Weapons into our Hands. We manage the Buſineſs of our

Souls

Souls as if they were of no Concern- Serm. 2.
ment, as if it were indifferent whether we be ſaved or damned. The very *Heathens* made better Uſe of the low Advantages God allowed them, and many reaſoned themſelves into the Practice of great Vertues. They, by the Strength of Reaſon alone, defied Pleaſure, deſpiſed the World, conquered their Paſſions, vindicated to the Soul all her juſt Rights and Dominion over the Body. And ſhall we Chriſtians, who have infinitely greater Aſſiſtances, ſo baſely ſuffer our ſelves to be overcome?

What ſhall we anſwer the *Captain of our Salvation?* what ſhall we plead to his Indictment?

I gave you the moſt righteous, the moſt noble Cauſe to maintain; The Glory of your *Creator*, and the everlaſting Happineſs of your own Souls. You, when ye were *Baptized*, took the *Military Sacrament*, and ſwore, that ye would *fight manfully againſt all mine and your Enemies, and continue my faithful Soldiers to your Lives end:* But you have diſhonourably betrayed the Heavenly Cauſe, trayterouſly joined with mine Enemies. I promiſed for your Encourage-

Serm. 2. Encouragement a *Crown*, a *Crown of Glory in the Heavens*: But ye have thrown away this *Shield of Faith*, calling in queſtion the Truth of my Revelation. I prepared for your Defence a *Helmet of Salvation againſt the fiery Darts of the Enemy*: But you have diſputed, and lived, and ſinned your ſelves into a Diſbelief of all *Immortality*. I offered you the *Sword of the Spirit*: But ye have broken its Edge, reſiſting, nay, denying its Influences, and all its ſalutary Operations.

Laſtly, Ye who call your ſelves Chriſtians, have with greater Boldneſs and Induſtry than any of my profeſſed Heathen Enemies, aſſaulted the *Divinity of my Perſon*, endeavouring to dethrone me into the Rank of a meer Man, ſuch *a one as your ſelves*.

And what ſhall we ſay to theſe things? truly, if we be wiſe, we will hold our peace.

Our Senſe doth aſſuredly prevail over our Faith, whilſt we proſecute the Intereſts of this World, as if there were no other, and love the preſent Life, as if we deſired no better.

Ariſtotle hath obſerved, that there have been *Philoſophers who held the Soul*

was

was made of Fire, others of *Air*, others of *Water*; but none ever thought it made of *Earth*. Yet are our Affections fixed upon this *Earth*, as if there were ſome near Affinity and Relation betwixt our Souls and it. The ancient *Jews* having entertained an Opinion, that their *Bodies* ſhould riſe in the ſame *Cloathes* wherein they were interred; with great Charge and Vanity adorned their *Corps* in the richeſt Apparel, till the Law was forced to reſtrain the Exceſs. What a ſtir do we make with our Bodies! we feed and pamper them with the moſt delicious, luxurious Dainties: We deck and think we beautify them with the Riches of both *Indies*; *Eaſt* and *Weſt* join together to ſatisfy extravagant Curioſity. And when we have done all, we do but paint the *Sepulchre*, Stench and Rottenneſs is within. No Care or Expence will keep them from Corruption, nor make them fit for Heaven. But Death is mightily inſtructive, its Approaches of Pain and Sickneſs teach all Men Wiſdom; pull off the Vizard, and force the moſt haughty and Proud to know themſelves.

Serm. 2. The *Primitive* Chriſtians underſtood the true Value of their Bodies, and their beſt Uſe; ſo treated them a quite contrary way than we do. They watched, faſted, made them endure Hardſhip, denied them not only all Unneceſſaries, but many Conveniencies of Life: And at laſt, for that Cauſe of Chriſt, (in which we are ſo cold, or indifferent) ſuffered them to be cut, *torn in pieces*, burnt, devoured by *wild Beaſts*, that they might *obtain* glorified, incorruptible Bodies in a moſt joyful *Reſurrection.*

Yet, if there be any (as in all Ages there have been ſome) to whom this important Belief of a Chriſtian, and his anſwerable Practices ſhall ſeem ridiculous, and be eſteemed *Madneſs*; to them I ſhall recommend the too late repenting Words of ſuch as *Feſtus* was, when they came into the other World, in the Wiſdom of *Solomon*, (5.4.) *This was he, that righteous Man whom ſometimes we had in Deriſion, and a Proverb of Reproach. We Fools accounted his Life Madneſs, and his End to be without Honour. How is he numbered amongſt the Children of God! and his Lot is amongſt the Saints! The Righteous*

Righteous ſhall live for evermore; their Reward alſo is with the Lord, and the Care of them is with the moſt high. Serm. 2.

The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, &c.

The End of the Second Sermon.

SERMON III.

Geneſis V. 24.

Enoch *walked with God, and was not; for God took him.*

THere is imprinted on the Soul of Man, as a part of the *Image* of God, ſuch a Love of true Goodneſs; which, as it can ſcarce ever be altogether blotted out, ſo is it the Ground and Reaſon of that Influence which great Examples of Vertue will always have upon Mankind. We yet are pleaſed to hear Narrations concerning the Piety of *Socrates*, the Vertue of *Brutus*, the inflexible Juſtice of *Cato*. When we hear, we love, and loving we admire, and admiring we feel ſtrong Inclinations to imitate; and deceaſed Goodneſs moves our Hearts with equal Joy or Sorrow, that once it lived, or now is dead.

The

Serm. 3. The Text preſents you with a noble Example of Piety, and its extraordinary Reward: *Enoch*, the firſt Perſon amongſt the Patriarchs, of whom it is ſaid, that *he walked with God.* There is ſome great thing included in the Expreſſion, which being applied to *Enoch*, indicates the Greatneſs of the Man. I ſhall enquire,

I. Wherein the Religion of the Primitive World did conſiſt.

II. What made up the Excellency of *Enoch*'s Piety.

III. What is included in the Expreſſion, *He walked with God.*

IV. I ſhall propound ſome Conſiderations ariſing from the Nature of his Reward, *God took him.*

I. What was the Religion of the *Primitive World.* Tho' we cannot from the Brevity of the Hiſtory, and the great Diſtance of Time particularly determine, yet have we ſufficient Evidence, that it was (as all the Works of God and Nature are) plain and eaſy: not compoſed of nice Obſcurities, or laborious Diſputes, which confound, not inform the Underſtanding; but of Principles

Principles fit, and conducing to the Ends for which it was deſigned, the preſent and future Happineſs of Mankind. Serm. 3.

The Apoſtle, (*Heb.* 11. 6.) reciting the Heroical Actions of the Patriarchs, tells that the Spring from whence they did proceed, was, a firm and ſolid Faith, conſiſting of two *Articles*, viz. *That God is*, and that *he is a Rewarder of them who diligently ſeek him:* Both which, as they are abſolutely neceſſary to all Religion, (for without the firſt, it would have no *Object*, without the ſecond, it would have no *Motive* to put it in Exerciſe) ſo joined together, they were ſufficient for, and have produced all thoſe generous Acts of exalted Piety, for which thoſe glorified Souls were on Earth renowned, and rewarded in Heaven. So that the general Principle which influenced and directed their Lives, was nothing but the Dictates of natural Reaſon; that νόμος ἐνσπειρόμενος, a Law engraven in Man's Nature, the univerſal Soul which then informed the intellectual World.

This Law of Nature (ſo long as the firſt Parent kept inviolate) he made the nobleſt *Epocha*, the moſt deſirable part

of Time that ever was upon Earth; it
Serm. 3. is called, *The State of Innocence.* During which, his Happineſs was ſo great, that it is diſputed whether Heaven it ſelf would have made any Addition to it.

By the Obſervation of this Law, his religious Poſterity merited the glorious Title of the *Sons of God*; which all Languages have ſince beſtowed upon their excellent, vertuous Men. By this Rule *Enoch* in the Text ran his Race, finiſhed his Courſe, obtained a moſt honourable Character, and an exceeding great Reward.

In this Light *Abraham* walked before God, was *perfect*, and ſtands recorded to be his *Friend.* In this conſiſted that Juſtice of *Noah*, including all Righteouſneſs, which gave him Favour with God, and exempted him from that dreadful Puniſhment which the Sins of all Mankind beſides called from Heaven. Laſtly, This is that eternal Law which *Melchizedeck*, making the Rule of Government both to himſelf and his Subjects, (tho' he was indeed no more than an Earthly Prince) is called, *The Prieſt of the moſt high God*, and ſtands deſcribed, by the Apoſtle, in the Definition

nition of Eternity, *without beginning of Days, or end of Life.* Serm. 3.

And this seems to be the Foundation of that elaborate Comparison betwixt Christ and him; and doth well explain the Eternity of our Saviour's *Priesthood.* They were not *Priests* of any Temporary Laws, as that of *Moses*, but both of them of one which is Eternal: The Practice and Execution of this made it be said of him, that he was like unto the *Son of God*, Heb. 7. 3. For our Saviour was the Great Restorer of the Law of Nature; and I am not fully resolved whether his Gospel contain any Additions to it, besides Faith in him, and the Observation of the Sacraments, as means to convey that Grace necessary to the working out our Salvation.

The Vertues which he Preached, Meekness, Humility, Justice, Purity of Heart, and a Charity so universal as to comprehend whole Mankind; are they not *connate* with us? and do not our Souls entertain them as old Acquaintance, to which we have a natural Relation? And from other Instances in our Saviour's Doctrine, we clearly perceive, that his Intention was to reduce all the Offices of Human Life to right Reason;

and that that was the moſt right which
Serm. 3. directed *Adam* in his Innocence, whilſt yet it was not vitiated by any inordinate Deſire. So that the Practice of Morality (which ſome deride as an Attainment too low, and to make the leaſt, if any part of a Chriſtian Life) is by Chriſt himſelf declared to be of Divine Original, and eſſential to his Revelation.

Beſides this natural Law, or right Reaſon, the primitive World had two Helps or Advantages, which did, or might afford them great Aſſiſtance in the Exerciſe of their Piety.

1. The frequent *Appearance* of God himſelf, or his Holy Angels to inform and encourage them in any Difficulties of their Duty. For the Law of Nature, conſiſting of general Rules, is like a ſpacious open Field, wherein the moſt wary Traveller may eaſily looſe his way, till by Incloſures it be ſettled into narrower Paths. When therefore their Rules of Obedience did not clearly direct in particular Caſes, God was pleaſed to talk with them Face to Face, and other ways, to ſatisfy their Doubts, encourage their Weakneſs. Great muſt have

have been the Conſolation which *Noah* had, when God told him he would *eſtabliſh his Covenant with him only*; and gave particular Directions for the making that *Ark in which he and his Family ſhould be ſaved*, amidſt the utter Deſtruction of the whole World. Serm. 3.

What Vigour and Reſolution filled *Abraham*'s Soul, when he heard the Words of God Almighty, ſaying, (*Gen.* 15. 1.) *Fear not, I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great Reward!*

Indeed it muſt not be denyed, that there always have been ſupernatural Illuminations, Divine Admonitions communicated to Holy Minds prepared by true Devotion. For as *Maximus Tyrius* ſpeaks, θεῦ μανθάνον, καὶ ἀνθρώπων νοῦς χρῆμα ξυγγενές, *Divine Revelations and good Souls are of near Alliance*; and *Porphyry* calls a vertuous Man, διὸ μεγάλως ὀμείνης, *One familiarly acquainted with God himſelf.*

And if ſo extraordinary Converſe of God with Man, hath, in theſe latter Ages of the World, ſuffered long Interruptions; if Heaven very rarely doth deſcend to us, it is becauſe we more rarely aſcend towards Heaven. Our Souls, clouded with black Paſſions and Earthly Affections, are not capable of

receiving thoſe Divine Influences, which
Serm. 3. enter not, nor ſhine, but in the moſt purified Minds.

2. The ſecond great Help which the primitive World had to Religion, was, their *Longævity*, the many Years which they lived.

By this, Rules of Life given by God to particular Perſons, the Wiſdom of religious Princes, the Counſels and Inſtructions of other pious Men, might eaſily be conveyed thro' many Generations. *Methuſalem* lived with *Adam* 243 Years, *Noah* lived with *Methuſalem* 500 Years, *Abraham* lived with *Noah* 58, in him the Hiſtory and Experience of more than 2000 Years met together for the Inſtruction of that Generation. Great Examples appeared then, not like *Comets*, to attract Mens Eyes a little time, and preſently vaniſh, and leave the World to wonder why they appeared, or what they ſignified; but like the conſtant *Motions* of the Sun, they gave both Light and Life, Direction and Encouragement, to the Exerciſe of true Religion. If Men amongſt us, who have ſpent their younger Days in Sin and Vanity, do oft times grow

wiſe

wiſe before they end this ſhort Life which now they lead; how much more ſhould many *hundreds* of Years teach Men Wiſdom? Large Catalogues of God's Judgments might make Men fear him, and acknowledge his Providence in the World; many Inſtances of which could not but happen in the Length of their Lives, as but very few in the Shortneſs of ours. And it may be worthy our Conſideration, whether Length of Life to them was not intended, in ſome meaſure, to ſupply the want of thoſe greater Aſſiſtances of the *Holy Spirit*, which are the reſerved, peculiar Priviledge of Chriſtianity. Serm. 3.

II. Wherein conſiſted the Excellency of *Enoch*'s Piety? He exactly diſcharged all the Capacities in which he was, of ſerving God, and doing good to Man.

1. As he was a *Prince*, he promoted the true Religion, and ruled his People with Juſtice; he was the true Example of all Vertue, conquering the Temptations which attend Greatneſs, well armed againſt the Aſſaults of Flattery and unjuſt Ambition. Who

would, in his Days, be pious, muſt not
Serm. 3. leave, but come to *Court.* Like *David*, (Pſal. 101. 2.) *he walked in his Houſe with a perfect Heart; he would not know a wicked Perſon; his Eyes were upon the Faithful in the Land*, to protect, encourage and reward them: He practiſed none of thoſe (σοφίσματα βασιλέων) Royal *Sophiſtries*, as *Ariſtotle* calls *Myſteries of State*, but led his People, like a Flock, in the plain and eaſy Paths of Nature's Laws.

Great was the Simplicity of thoſe early Ages, when Kings looked on themſelves but as Maſters of larger Families, and pleaſed themſelves with no Title, ſo much as of a *good Shepherd*: Which Cuſtom remained amongſt the ancient *Greeks*, as we ſee by *Homer*, who imitating the *Jews*, ſcarce beſtows any other honourable Name upon his Princes, or on King *Agamemnon* himſelf, then Paſtors of their People: And the *Roman* Word for Kings, is plainly the *Hebrew* Word for Shepherds. How popular and obliging was their Behaviour, we ſee in the ancient *Tragedians*, who bring Kings upon the Stage alone, walking the Streets, and viſiting their Subjects. Yet they knew how to feed

and

and encreaſe their Flocks, they founded flouriſhing Kingdoms, happy Common-wealths, whoſe Citizens envied not the Magnificence of the *Perſian Monarchs*: They created and cheriſhed the greateſt Wits, without the Monuments of whoſe Induſtry, our ſelves had ſtill remained *Barbarians*. Serm. 3.

2. As he was a *Prophet*, both by his Example and Preaching, he taught and explained every Branch of the natural Law, ſeverely reproved the Wickedneſs of the *Age*, and foretold the terrible Judgment of the univerſal *Deluge*, a juſt Puniſhment of their Impenitence.

3. As he was a *Prieſt*, (for in ancient Times *Prieſthood* was ever annexed to *Majeſty*, and eſteemed no Diminution, but the greateſt Ornament and Security of the moſt *Imperial Crown*) he offered Praiſes and *Euchariſtical* Sacrifices, acknowledging the Beneficence of the Creator; and by expiatory ones he interceded for a ſinful People, and often obtained Pardon, or a Prorogation of the Puniſhment. And all theſe Offices, which include whole Human Life, and whoſe Influences extend to Eternity,

Serm. 3. Eternity, he fulfilled with ſuch Wiſdom, Induſtry and Integrity as well deſerved the Character given him in the *Text*.

2. He preſerved his Vertue in the midſt of a degenerate and very wicked World: Which we gather from this, That *Enoch* was tranſlated but 69 Years before *Noah* was born; in whoſe time Prophaneneſs and Vice were come to that pitch, that God thought fit to ſend a *Deluge* to waſh it away.

We are all apt to complain, that the *former Times were better than ours*: But a Wiſe Man hath told us, we do not enquire *wiſely concerning this Matter*. There were ever the ſame Paſſions, Pride, Ambition, Envy, Revenge and Folly; and thoſe no more under the Command of Reaſon than now they are. The Happineſs of the *Golden Age*, is Fabulous and Poetical. *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Image of *Gold*, Silver, Braſs and Iron, is the true Interpretation of *Heſiod*'s ſeveral Ages; for he lived before *Daniel*, and invented the Fable in an angry Humor, diſcontented by the Injuſtice of his Brother. If the Golden Age was no happier than *Nebuchadnezzar*'s

zar's Reign, (whom *Daniel* calls the Head of Gold) wherein was the Excel- Serm. 3.
lency of it? when the Vices of Atheism, Pride and Cruelty were so great, that they deprived him of his Kingdom and his Reason, and gave him his Dwelling with the *Beasts of the Field.* The Image contains the Subversion of the greatest Monarchs, and most horrible Devastations for some *thousands* of Years.

If we look into the Sacred History; which tells us the Original of all things, we find the renowned *State of Innocence* quite broken, and all the Happiness lost by one Act of *ungoverned Desire:* And it would make one doubt, whether the Perfection of *Adam*'s State were indeed so great as is commonly represented, it seeming to vanish, not by degrees, but as it were altogether, few Footsteps of it being found in his Posterity; as if the Sun should set in a Moment, and leave no Remembrance of his Presence in the gradual Approaches of the Night. The next Record is, That *Cain* slew his Brother; and by and by *God saw the Wickedness of Man that it was great.* Since all Writers complain of their own Times, it is a Demonstration, that the World

Serm. 3. World was always bad, only we think thoſe Evils the greateſt which neareſt affect our Senſes; and Diſtance of Time and Place weaken the Force of any Impreſſion. We lived not before, and Millions of Human Actions are omitted in *Hiſtory*, which, had they been recorded, would have made as *black* a Repreſentation of the paſt, as we believe due to our own Times.

So we ſee good Men have had ever undeſired Opportunities for the Exerciſe of their Piety. When Wickedneſs abounds, then will the good Man ſhew his Courage, and ſay, νῦν παρέστι τὰ Ὀλύμπια, νῦν εἴλιν οἱ ἀγῶνες. Now is the Time to teſtify my Valour, and to be crowned. God and Angels have not a braver Spectacle than the Conflicts and Victories of a noble *Vertue*: Nothing in the *Agoniſticks* is to be compared to it. That Bravery and Gallantry which ſeems to be in the great *Nimrods* of this World, what is it but too often the ſwelling of their own unbounded Pride and Vain-glory? The Triumphs which the mightieſt *Conquerors* have made over their miſerable *Vaſſals*, were true Emblems of that worſe Slavery wherein they

they were captivated by their own *predominant Vices.*

The Valour and Puiſſance of a Soul poſſeſſed with true Religion, is of univerſal Extent. I can do all things, ſaith St. *Paul:* And therefore it is by him called, the *Spirit of Power*, in Oppoſition to the *Spirit of Fear.* Sin being nothing but ἀδυναμία, *Impotency* and Weakneſs. There are thoſe latent Powers in the Souls of Men, which, if they were but ſuffered to exert themſelves, would certainly vanquiſh all Wickedneſs out of the World, and prove themſelves to be *Divine.* As that *Central Fire*, which ſome Philoſophy hath placed in the Earth, ſhall at length throw off thoſe thick Dregs and Spots which now choke and impriſon it, and become again, what once it was, a part of Heaven. This was the Excellency of *Enoch*'s Piety, that it ſtood in Oppoſition and preſerved it ſelf againſt a general Impiety; like that *noble Spartan*, who, with a few, ſtood in the Gap, and broke the Fury of an innumerable Army; where tho' he was killed, yet he was not conquered. His *Vertue* will be Immortal.

III. What

Serm. 3. II. What is included in this Expreſſion, *He walked with God.* It includes two things eſpecially.

1. An inward Principle of Life and Activity.

2. Progreſſion or Improvement in Goodneſs.

1. An inward Principle of Life, in Oppoſition both to that *Sloathfulneſs* in Religion, and alſo to that *Hypocriſy* which hath ſeized upon the greateſt part of Chriſtians. By the *firſt*, Men become ſtupid and inſenſible in the Concerns of *Eternity*, move ſcarce one true ſtep toward Heaven. By the *ſecond*, Men move like *Puppets*, whoſe Motions are all forced and artificial; whereas true Goodneſs is all Life and Spirit from the ἀυτοζωή, the *Divine Life*, God himſelf, and is always repreſented in Scripture by thoſe things whoſe Natures are in Action. So *run that ye may obtain. So fight I, not as beating the Air.* Ye were *Darkneſs, but now are ye Light: Ye who were dead in Sin, hath he quickned.*

Every good Man hath ἐνδόντι an *Elaſtick Spring*, which actuates all his Powers,

ers, informs all his Faculties to the Attainment of true Happineſs; whilſt others lie faſt bound in the Fetters of *tyrannical Luſts*, or falſe *Principles*, (both which render them ſluggiſh and inactive to their Duty) He finds himſelf inſtated in the *Liberty of the Sons of God*; ------ free from all Force which either the Dominion of Sin, or any ſuppoſed Decrees of Heaven hath put upon him. There are a ſort of *Mechanical Chriſtians*, who do but act a part in Religion, are not actuated by it. Serm. 3.

They ſet it forth in pompous Shews, and variety of deluſive Motion; but if you look near into it, there is nothing but *Art*; all its Wheels are informed by groſs and earthly Oſtentation, all the Action it hath, is from *popular Air*, Worldly Intereſt, and Vain-glory: Whereas true Religion is an inward Nature, always giving Proof of its Divine Activity.

2. To walk with God, ſignifies Progreſs or Improvement in Goodneſs, not to ſtop or return back, but with St. *Paul*, *to run that we may obtain*, to *preſs towards the Mark*, like the Morning Light which *ſhineth more and more to the*

the perfect Day. *Seneca*, in his Epiſtles
Serm. 3. to his Friend *Lucilius*, acquaints him with many wiſe Sayings of Philoſophers, which he treaſured up for the Improvement of his Mind in Vertue. *Quæris quid profecerim! amicus eſſe mihi cæpi:* It is a good Sign of *Proficiency to be pleaſed with our ſelves.* *Philoſophiæ ſervias oportet, ut tibi contingat vera libertas:* *Be a Servant to Wiſdom, that ye may obtain true Liberty.* *Moleſtum eſt vitam ſemper inchoare:* 'Tis troubleſome to be ever beginning to Live. *Initium ſalutis eſt notitia peccati:* The Knowledge of ones Fault, is the beginning of Health. *Te quoque dignum finge Deo:* Make your ſelves worthy of God. By the diligent Obſervance of ſuch like Sayings he tells us, *Non emendari me tantum ſed transfigurari:* He had not only wrought great Emendation in himſelf, *but was wholly changed into another, a better Man.* If the whole Army of our Paſſions be too ſtrong for us to combat altogether, we muſt conquer one after another, and add one Vertue to another. Certainly, if we could but every Day, or every Week, do ſomething that might weaken the Power of *Vice* in us, ſtrengthen and encourage the

Remains

Remains of Piety, we ſhould in a ſhort time become new Creatures. How pleaſant will it be to behold and feel the Encreaſes of the Divine Life within us! by what degrees Chriſt is formed in us! what Light now ſpreads it ſelf! into what Liberty do we find our ſelves tranſlated! we muſt never be diſcouraged, never diverted by flattering Temptations. Be content to meet with Difficulties. *Vertue* is the greateſt Acquiſt in the World: Expect not to get that on eaſy Terms which Heaven it ſelf will be the *Reward* of. Remember the Rule of *Epictetus*: *If thou beeſt not* Socrates, *live as if thou wouldſt be* Socrates. Thou muſt go on to Perfection. Serm. 3.

IV. Let us conſider the Nature of *Enoch*'s Reward, *He was not, for God took him*, explained (*Heb.* 11. 5.) *Enoch* was *tranſlated, that he ſhould not ſee Death*; he died not, but was carried alive into Heaven. In Imitation whereof the Heathens made ſome of their Heroes, *Ganymed*, *Pelops*, *Romulus*, with others, to be ſnatcht up to Heaven: But thoſe Stories are derided by their Wiſe Men, who give a true Account of their Deaths. From whence

Serm. 3. 1. We are informed in the Nature of thoſe Bodies we ſhall have at the Reſurrection.

It is not to be imagined, That *Enoch*'s Body, with all the Earthly Qualities which here it had, was born up into Heaven, and there remains: But that it underwent ſeveral Rarefactions and Alterations, according to the Degrees of Purity in the Air thro' which it paſſed, which if it could not be, according to Philoſophy, without Pain, we are to conſider, that his Tranſlation, as it was intended an Honour to him, ſo it was no leſs a Document to the World, in the Belief of a *future State.*

It is a ſerious Queſtion which *Celſus* asks, ποία γὰρ ἀνθρώπων ψυχὴ προθήσεται ἂν σῶμα σεσηπὸς, *What Soul would deſire to be united to ſuch a corrupted Body?* To which *Origen* anſwers, That either he doth not underſtand, or maliciouſly repreſent this *Article of Chriſtian Faith:* For as to theſe Bodies, qualified as they are, all good Men, Chriſtians and Heathens, have greatly complained of them, calling them the *Priſons* and *Sepulchres* of the Soul; attended with ſo many Diſadvantages, Allurements to Vice, Impediments

pediments to Vertue, that they looked upon this Life no better than *Death*, a State of Punishment for Sins committed in a former. *Porphyrie* saith of *Plotinus*, ἔοικεν ὡς αἰσχυνομένῳ ὅτι ἐν τῷ σώματί, *He looked as one ashamed to be in the Body.* A Body in which St. *Paul* tells us *dwelleth no good thing*, he calls it an *Earthy Tabernacle*, wherein we are burdened, *and groan earnestly, waiting for the Redemption.* This Body perpetually tempting us to sin, keeping up an eternal War against our Reason, nourishing up an Army of unruly, mutinous Passions, on purpose to rebel against, and too often lead their Soveraign into a dishonourable Captivity. This *Body of Sin* subject to infinite Infirmities arising from Matter, cannot be the Desire of good Men, or suitable to the happy State of Heaven. This was the great Objection Wise Heathens had against a Resurrection. *Plutarch* deriding the Story of *Romulus* his being taken into Heaven, saith, *As it is an impious thing to rob Vertue of its Divinity*, so θεὸν μιγνύειν γῇ, *to place (Earth) his Body in Heaven, is perfect Madness.* Here, by reason of a heavy Load of Corporeity, the Soul is dozy, and *Lethargick.* The corruptible

Serm. 3.

Body preſſeth down the Spirit. St. *Paul*
Serm. 3. therefore called him Fool who asked a Queſtion including ſo unreaſonable a Suppoſition. Our Saviour ſays we ſhall be like the *Angels in Heaven*, who have not ſurely ſuch groſs Bodies as are ours: But St. *Paul* ſpeaks more plainly, (1 *Cor.* 15.50.) *This I ſay, That Fleſh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God*; which they, who would interpret of Metaphorical Fleſh and Blood, *i. e.* ſinful Affections, may as well turn the whole Article of a *Reſurrection*, as ſome ancient Hereticks did, into a *Metaphor*.

The Bodies of the *Reſurrection* will be anſwerable to the end of our Riſing, not ſuch as would diſturb the Soul in its Divine Operations, but fitted on purpoſe to a State of eternal Spirituality. Theſe are thoſe *Eagles Wings* the *Jews* ſay God will give the Righteous when he renews the World. A healthful Conſtitution, both of Mind and Body, is truly made to compleat the Happineſs of this Life; and it will be good Mens Happineſs to all Eternity, to have their Souls purified from all Inclinations to Sin, and to be cloathed with cœleſtial, incorruptible Bodies.

2. From

2. From the Tranſlation of *Enoch*, we may conclude the Perfection of his Piety. He was prepared to leave this World, fit for Heaven. It ſurely doth proceed from the Goodneſs and Mercy of Divine Providence to the Generality of Men; to ſummon them into the other Life by a gradual Decay of this. Serm. 3.

So great and many are our Offences; ſo weak and imperfect hath been our Repentance, that it is of very good Conſequence to endure the Diſcipline of a lingring Diſeaſe; which gives time to think whither we are going, and mend (as much as may be) the Deficiencies in our Preparation for Eternity. Moſt Men wiſh for a ſhort and eaſy Paſſage, free from great or long Torment. That indeed was the Wiſh of a *Heathen* who had no Faith in Futurity; but ſuch a Death is not always εὐθανασία good for, or fit to be the Prayer of a *Chriſtian*.

Few are arrived at that Aſſurance of Salvation, as not to deſire that God would give them time for receiving *Spiritual* Counſel and Conſolation from their Friends, and that Chriſtian *Viaticum*, the Holy *Communion*, with the Prayers of the Church: From all which they find Strength conveyed againſt the

Serm. 3. *Terrors of Death*, and a firmer Belief fixed in the Joys of Heaven. The *Jews* ſay, That the Death of the Righteous, in their Language, is called לקיחה, which we tranſlate, *God took him:* But we have reaſon to pray againſt ſudden Death, which would deprive us of all thoſe Advantages neceſſary to us; tho' the Perfection of *Enoch*'s Piety did not want them; he was prepared whenever God ſhould call. Amongſt the many Words and Phraſes which all Languages have invented to expreſs what we call *Dying*. The *Greek* ἀποδημῆσαι, which the *Latin Defunctus* well explains, ſeems to me to give the moſt uſeful Notion of Death.

He only can properly be ſaid to be *defunct*, who hath rightly executed and diſcharged the *Ends* and *Offices* of Life. This ſhould ever be in our Thoughts, to animate us in our Duty. The ſtrict Obſervance of this would bring us to that Attainment which Wiſe Men made the *End* of all Philoſophy, *To be armed againſt the Fears of Death.* Nothing but a Conſcience of our Sincerity in Obedience can give us any rational Comfort, or bear up our Spirits againſt the Uncertainties of Death. If we walk with

with God, we ſhall die, tho' not in the ſame manner as *Enoch*, yet with Comfort ſufficient, and certain Hopes of that happy Reſurrection to eternal Life which his *Tranſlation* was intended to confirm. Serm. 3.

3. If the Character given of *Enoch* may be eſteemed part of his Reward, (true Fame being ever due to Vertue) we ſee, that of all the Accompliſhments Human Nature is capable of, none is more acceptable to God, or gives a more laſting and honourable Monument amongſt Men, than Piety and true Religion. From all the Excellencies which enriched *Enoch*'s Soul, God, the beſt Judge, choſe this for his eternal Commendation, that he *walked with him, and pleaſed him.* Thoſe Praiſes which commonly ſwell the *Epitaphs*, and fill the Marbles of the Dead, are either not their own, or which are purchaſed with the Loſs and Expenſe of their Vertue.

The *Triumphs of War*, in which Princes do moſt glory, the high Attainments in Human Knowledge, both which the *Jewiſh* Traditions magnify in *Enoch*; nay, even the Gift of *Propheſy*,

Serm. 3. (which the Scripture assures us he had) none of these make any part of his Commendation: For however they may be valuable in themselves, and in the Opinion of the World, yet, in Comparison of true Piety, they are nothing in the most righteous Judgment. Nothing but *Piety* can either procure us lasting Honour in this Life, or eternal Happiness in the next.

The End of the Third Sermon.

SER-

SERMON IV.

St. John XVI. 13.

Howbeit, when he the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth.

THE Pretences which a great part of Mankind hath always made to Divine *Inſpiration*, however weakly founded in Scripture or Reaſon, have yet proved very troubleſom to the World; the Prophetick Promiſes, That in the latter days all ſhould be *Taught of God*, *that God would pour out his Spirit upon all Fleſh*, did truly receive their Glorious Completion when *Chriſt* himſelf Preached upon Earth his moſt Heavenly Doctrine, and after his Aſcenſion ſupplied his abſence by the Miraculous Deſcent of the *Holy Ghoſt*, by the Miniſtry of which Bleſſed *Spirit* he hath ſettled the Way

Serm. 4. Way and Means of Salvation in ſuch Wiſdom, as is abundantly ſufficient to ſilence the vain Boaſtings of all *Enthuſiaſm*. From this Text I ſhall Diſcourſe theſe two Particulars.

I. Concerning thoſe Steps and Methods, by which the Divine Providence, by the Mediation of the *Holy Ghoſt*, hath provided for the ſecurity of Chriſtian Truth in the World.

II. Explain ſome Characters or Qualifications of this Truth, whereof the *Holy Spirit* is the Diſpenſer.

1. The firſt Work, whereby the *Holy Spirit* hath provided for the upholding Chriſtian Truth is, the fixing and determining certain Principles, as the Foundation of the Faith of a Chriſtian. For Chriſtianity is not a meer *Caſtle in the Air*, having no more reality than the Fancies of Princes ſhall pleaſe to beſtow upon it, not a Bubble, owing its Being to the Breath of an Humorous *Sovereign*, which he can extinguiſh with the ſame Blaſt which blew it up into a ſpecious Exiſtence, it is not built upon the *Sands*, but upon a *Rock*, the certi-

tude

tude of a Revelation far more excellent than ever the World had been acquainted with; here it is not permitted to the *Capricious Wits* of vain Men, to create to themſelves a Form of Belief, and to vary that Form as Intereſt, Prejudice, or Ambition ſhall invite them. Chriſtians have their *Fundamental Laws*, which every true Subject is bound to preſerve inviolable, delivered firſt in the Diſcourſes of *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*, and before they were committed to Writing were reſerved amongſt the Sacred *Traditions* of the *Church*, and are often referred to in Scriptures, where ſometimes they are called a *Form of Doctrine*, *The Holy Commandment*, *The Faith once delivered*, *The Form of wholſom Words*, The *Unction* that teacheth all things, and The *Seed that abideth in them.* Serm. 4.

To this Rule of Faith we find the *Primitive Doctors* Appealing in Caſe of Scandal, or peremptory *Nonconformity*, *We have no ſuch Cuſtom, nor the Churches of God.* To this certain Rule we Read the new founded Churches exhorted to betake themſelves for Direction in difficult Emergencies, *Hold faſt the Traditions which ye have been Taught*, O Timothy! *Keep that which hath been committed*

ted to thy Truſt. By this the *Cenſures* of
Serm. 4. the Church were regulated; upon this the Obligation of the Decrees of *Councils* depended; this Rule of Faith, *Hereſy* in its Nature, doth ſuppoſe, as being a deflection from that *Rule*, by which the Spirits and Doctrines of Men were to be tried; it was the ſolidity of ſome indubitable Principles, which gave the Name of prophane and vain Bablings, to the Diſputes of *Hymenæus* and *Philetus*. Laſtly, (*Heb.* 6. 1.) we Read of the *Principles* of the Doctrine of Chriſt, That liberty of daring any thing is allowable to none but thoſe two ſorts of Men, on whom the *Poet* long ſince beſtowed it, whoſe Conceptions are not deſigned for any real Exiſtence, nor any other kind of being than what conſiſts in pure *Fiction*, and *fading Colours*; if all the Extravagancies which are Drawn by *Painters*, or Feigned by *Poets*, ſhould immediately become living Creatures, if *Centaures* and *Chimera's* were found to receive any other degree of Nature and Life than what is formed in the Artiſts Imagination, ſuch liberty of Invention would ſoon prove deſtructive to the World, and muſt neceſſarily be reſtrained; of no leſs Concernment it is

to

to ſet bounds to ſuch monſtrous *Conceptions* as have no foundation in Nature or Religion; *Plato*'s Laws are fitted for *Plato*'s *Common Wealth*, never to be in Exerciſe, but eternally to remain in Contemplation; he muſt have likewiſe made another kind of Creature than Man now is, on purpoſe for the obſervation of his *Polity*; but the Religion which our Saviour hath Taught the World, being adapted to, and really intended for the exaltation of Human Nature in the ſincere Belief and Practice of things contained in that Revelation, muſt neceſſarily be furniſhed with ſettled Principles, upon which, as on an *immovable Center*, whole Mankind may ſecurely reſt, and by them direct the variety of *Acts* in a Moral or more Religious Life; in the *City of God* there is not one Religion for the *Laick*, another for the *Noble* and the *Learned*, but the Divinity of its Laws equally command Obedience from all Conditions of Men; as in *Lucian*'s *City* of Virtue the external Qualifications of High and Low, Rich and Poor, Servant and Free,(which in the World give marks of great diſtinction) are not once named, but whoſoever he is who comes with a good Mind, Serm. 4.

Serm. 4. Mind, willing to be Inſtructed, and yield Obedience, with a firm reſolution not to be diſcouraged with any Difficulties, nor diſtracted with unprofitable Diſputes, will eaſily be admitted to all the Priviledges of that Community; and as I believe the way to Happineſs is by ſome made ſtraiter, by the addition of *Articles*, than the Author of Salvation did intend, ſo I fear that the Belief of only *one Arttcle*, *That Jeſus is the true Meſſias*, unleſs explained as largely as *Philip* ſurely did when he Preached to the *Eunuch*, *Jeſus* will not be found to fill up that Faith, which in the *Catholick Church* hath always been judged neceſſary to a Chriſtian; he will be but a very mean *Geometer* who upon the underſtanding of a few *Definitions* and *Axioms*, whereon that Science is built, ſhall lay claim to ſo great a Name.

2. Divine Providence, for the maintenance of Chriſtian Truth, hath founded the Society of the Church, to whoſe *Care*, *Cuſtody*, *and Diſpenſation* that Truth ſhould be committed. In the firſt the *Holy Spirit* did but kindle a *Light*, in this it ſets the *Candle upon a Hill*, from whence, as from an *Ægyptian Pharos*, it

it ſends forth its Rays, to direct the al-
moſt Shipwrack'd Veſſel to its deſired Serm. 4.
Haven; I am not ignorant there are ſome darkened Minds pretend they cannot ſee it, who enquire after it as jeſting *Pilate* asked our Saviour, *What is Truth?* who look upon the Notion of a *Church*, as it is a diſtinct Society from the State Politick of the World, to be no more than an *Ens Rationis*, to have no Reality, nor admit of a *Legitimate Definition*, deriding its *Cenſures*, nullifying its *Authority*, ſlighting its *Inſtitutions*; but tell me, if one ſhould ſet before thine Eyes a *Fabrick* made up of Head, Hands, and Feet, with all other Members neceſſary, joined in a regular Compoſition, and likewiſe ἡ ἔνδον, *ſome inward Principle*, whereby Life, Motion, and all other Functions of its Nature were performed, wouldſt thou not call it a living Creature? And if there be offered to thy Conſideration certain Laws, Rites, Cuſtoms, Priviledges, Orders of Government and Governors clearly laid down, and contained in a *Charter*, Signed and Sealed by an unqueſtionable Authority, wilt thou not acknowledge that a ſufficient Ground to build a *Polity* or *Corporation*? And if the

Laws

Laws and Uſages of this be found to be
Serm. 4. of a diſtinct and different Nature from the Laws of any other, wilt thou not call it *A diſtinct Society?*

Conſult then the *Antiquities* of this Polity whereof we ſpeak, Peruſe the *Annales* of this Community, Read the *Records* of thoſe who have been chief Members, and Exerciſed the higheſt Offices in this Sacred Corporation, there you ſhall find an *Hierarchy*, Orders of Divine Perſons, diſtinguiſhed into Superior and Inferior *Dignities*, who aſcended into this new founded Government not by the Election of the People, nor by the Deſignation of Worldly Princes, but they were ſet apart firſt by Chriſt himſelf, and after endued with Power by the *Holy Ghoſt*; there you may behold them Glorious without Support from Earthly Crowns or Scepters, gaining Obedience to their Commands without and againſt the Temporal Sword of *Emperors*, Offenders Puniſhed by inviſible Powers, Proud Hereſies ſilenced by the *Decrees* of their *Aſſemblies*, and all the *Infallible Characteriſticks* of a diſtinct Society almoſt Three Hundred Years before the *Empire* turned Chriſtian. *Councils* called, *Schiſms* ſuppreſſed,

Heretick

Hereticks excommunicated, *Ceremonies* introduced, the Particularities of Go- Serm. 4.
vernment ſettled and confirmed; and the Church of Chriſt was informed with a Soul as different from that which informed the Powers of the World, as Light is from Darkneſs. And when *Kings* turned Chriſtians, *ſhe* always acknowledged their Supremacy, rejoycing under the *Shadow of their Wings*, and bleſſing God for their Favour and Protection. What more would importune Reaſon have? If it be not ſufficient to produce the *Charter* granted by Chriſt himſelf, confirmed by the *Holy Ghoſt*, ſuppoſed, and built upon by the Practice of the *Apoſtles* and their lawful Succeſſors for fifteen hundred Years, till, by an unheard of Sacriledge, *Eraſtus* firſt (without a Poetical Fiction) attempted to join the Living to the Dead, to make the *Church* an *Eſcheate to the State*, and the Kingdom of Chriſt to become a Kingdom of this World. And indeed, how doth it abhor, from the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of our Saviour, to expoſe his Infant-Truth to all the Indignities of a Barbarous World, without having provided any, who, when the reſtleſs Malice of its Heathen

Serm. 4. Enemies ſhould endeavour to extinguiſh it, might maintain its Life, even with the Loſs of their own, when the Pride or Ambition of its *Schiſmatical*, pretended Friends, would tear it in pieces, might be careful to *bind up its Sores*, heal its *Wounds*, and preſerve the Unity of its Conſtitution?

Surely the Words of Chriſt are very plain, (St. *Luke* 22. 29, 30.) *And I appoint unto you a Kingdom.* ------ *That you may eat and drink at my Table, in my Kingdom, and ſit on Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of* Iſrael. In which (as by his laſt Will and Teſtament) he bequeathes to his Apoſtles a *Kingdom*, with thoſe *Rites* and *Priviledges* which *Ignatius* of Old divided into, (1.) Ἀρχὴν, *Power* and *Juriſdiction, to ſit on Thrones judging.* (2.) Ἱερατεύειν, *Exerciſe of Sacred Offices*, including in that which ſeems moſt peculiar to the Goſpel, the *Adminiſtration of the Lord's Supper.* Yet, if to the numerous places in the *New Teſtament*, whereon the *Divine Right*, the Church challengeth, is firmly grounded, we add the Practice of *Apoſtolical Times*, and the Ages immediately ſucceeding; ſo ſtrong are Prejudices!

judices! We are affrighted with the μορμολυκεῖον of *Antichriſt*, the *Myſtery of Iniquity*, the φιλοπρώτεια of *Diotrephes*, and the Teſtimony of *Hegeſippus*, that the Faith was corrupted preſently upon the Death of the Apoſtles. The moſt ancient *Records* of the Diſpute, (the Epiſtles of *Ignatius*) are accuſed of Impoſture and Barbariſm, againſt the Faith of *Antiquity*, the Authority of the beſt *Manuſcripts*, and Judgment of the moſt Learned Criticks; only becauſe there is no other Anſwer to be given, but denying them to be *genuine*. Serm. 4.

The ſtrongeſt Objection, even in the Opinion of Bp. *Pearſon*, which *Salmaſius*, *Blondel*, *Ballie*, and others the Adverſaries of *Epiſcopacy*, have produced againſt the Authority of the *Epiſtles*, under the Name of *Ignatius*, is taken from thoſe Words in the Epiſtle *Ad Magneſianos*.

Εἷς Θεός ἐστιν ὁ φανερώσας ἑαυτὸν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὅς ἐστιν αὐτοῦ λόγος ἀΐδιος, οὐκ ἀπὸ σιγῆς προελθών. Where our Saviour is called, The *Word of God*, *Eternal*, *proceeding not from, or after Silence*. They ſay, here is a plain Reference to the Hereſy of *Valentinus*, *Bythus* and *Sige* being the firſt in his Genealogies: But the true

Serm. 4. *Ignatius* lived before *Valentinus*, therefore could not mention his *Hereſy*, and that Epiſtle, wherein it is mentioned, muſt be *Suppoſititious*. In anſwer to this Objection, *Petavius*, *Iſaac Voſſius*, Dr. *Hammond*, and Bp. *Pearſon*, have carefully produced excellent Learning, with that Strength of Reaſon, more than ſufficient to end the Controverſy; yet hath it not had that Effect.

I therefore propoſe, That the Words οὐκ ἀπὸ σιγῆς προελθών, have no reſpect either to the Hereſy of *Ebion*, *Valentinus*, or any other: Only to St. *John Baptiſt*, in the manner of his Birth, related by St. *Luke*. *Zacharias*, for his Unbelief, was *Dumb* (ἔσῃ σιωπῶν) till the *Day* when the things foretold by the *Angel* were performed, *Cap.* 1. *Verſ.* 64. He wrote, ſaying, *His Name is* John. *And his Mouth was opened immediately, and his Tongue looſed, and he ſpake, and praiſed God*; that is, beſides thoſe Words, *His Name is John*, he ſpake fluently what follows. So *Ignatius* his Meaning is, *Chriſt* is not ſuch a λόγος Word as St. *John* was, who was ἀπὸ σιγῆς προελθών, came into the World after *the Silence of his Father*, but ἀίδιος *Eternal*.

How

How great an Opinion the *Jews* had of St. *John*, we read *Joh.* 1. 25. that he was *Elias*, that *Prophet*, and even *Chriſt* himſelf. So *Ignatius* prefers Chriſt, the *Eternal Word*, in Oppoſition to St. *John*, who was not ſo. Serm. 4.

It may be ſaid, that St. *John* is called φωνὴ, not λόγος: But it is certain, that in all Languages, Words of the ſame Signification are uſed promiſcuouſly. The *Chaldee Paraphraſts* almoſt conſtantly for the *Hebrew* קול put מימר in the *Orphaick* Verſes ἀυδὴ and λόγος are indifferently. St. *Chryſoſtom*, ſpeaking of *Zacharias*, hath the Word σιγᾷ for σιωπᾷ, which is in St. *Luke*.

That ἀπὸ ſignifies μετὰ *after*, Bp. *Pearſon* hath proved unqueſtionably.

So that if what I have writ prove true, *Ignatius* might uſe the Word σιγὴ without any Reference to *Valentinus*; and all the Arguments *Blondel* hath uſed in this Particular of *Chronology*, are impertinent, and do not deſerve ſo much Learning as hath been beſtowed, to confute them.

This likewiſe will ſatisfy the Argument drawn from the Silence of the *Fathers*, That neither *Ireneus*, who writ ſo much on purpoſe againſt *Valen-*

tinus, nor *Euſebius*, nor *Athanaſius*, nor
Serm. 4. *Baſilus* againſt *Marcellus*, who denyed Chriſt to be *Eternal*, and aſſerted, that that λόγος Word did proceed μετὰ τὴν σιγὴν after *Silence*, have produced theſe Words of *Ignatius*. They did not, becauſe they thought them not to the purpoſe, but reſpected another matter.

I will only ſet down the Words of *R. Azariel*, (*apud Revelin. de Cabalâ, lib.* 1.) concerning the *Cabaliſtical Emanations*; the Expreſſion is very like this of *Ignatius*; מרוח יוצא הדבר ולא, from *the Spirit is produced the Word, not by the opening of the Lips, not by the Speech of the Tongue, nor by the Breath of a Man.*

Quid de his quæ (*de* Σιγῇ Ignatiana) *diximus, Sentient viri docti, neſcio; nondum enim ut opinor, a quopiami dicta ſunt.* Pearſonus *in Vindiciis.*

And one may juſtly wonder at St. *Hierom*, making the Schiſm in the Church of *Corinth* (1 *Cor.* 3. 4, 5.) to be the Occaſion and Original of *Epiſcopal Government*, when he could not be ignorant, that all Hiſtory teacheth, That St. *James*, *Brother of our Lord*, juſt after his Aſcenſion, was conſtituted *Biſhop* of *Jeruſalem* by the

the Apoſtles; nay, if we believe *Photius*, he was conſecrated, ἀποστολικῇ χειρί, or *Nicephorus*, ἀπὸ τῆς Σωτῆρος χειρός, by the Hand of *Chriſt himſelf:* That St. *Peter* fixed his See at *Antioch*, not as an Apoſtle, but as *Biſhop* of that particular City; and that this was thirteen or fourteen Years before it was ſaid at *Corinth*, I am of *Paul*, I am of *Apollo*; and when he went to *Rome*, he ordained *Enodius* his Succeſſor at *Antioch*, and St. *Mark* Biſhop of *Alexandria*; both which Ordinations precede the Schiſm at *Corinth* eight or nine Years. Laſtly, He could not but know that it appears from the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, with the ancient Monuments of the Church compared, That *Dionyſius* the Areopagite was conſecrated *Biſhop of Athens*, and *Timothy of Epheſus*; both by St. *Paul* one or two Years before that *Schiſm*. Serm. 4.

The firſt and great Miſtake in this Diſpute, concerning the Diſtinction of the *Church* from the *Civil State*, conſiſts in a wrong Notion of Power, which ſome have entertained, it being generally believed, that there is no Power but what conſiſts in external Force, whoſe Efficacy is material. So two great Bodies politick conquer one ano-

ther *mechanically.* That the Church can
Serm. 4. no other way excommunicate Offenders, maintain Truth, or confute Hereſies, than according to the late invented Laws of Motion; for this is all that remains to be ſaid when all Spirituality ſhall be baniſhed the Univerſe, meer Matter will be Omnipotent. And indeed this Notion of *Power* ſeems to be received from the *Roman* Writers, and tranſcribed from their Civil Law; who, when they had made themſelves Lords of the World, and reduced the Nations of the Earth, by Force of Arms, under their Dominion, did moſt wiſely tranſmit to Poſterity that Signification of *Poteſtas*, by which we might underſtand their Fortitude, rather than the true Nature of the thing. But the Power we challenge to the Church, is only a *Right* of obliging to the Performance of thoſe Duties which Chriſtianity and the *Unity of the Church* do require; and he who believes God hath made any Revelation of his Will to the World, cannot but think himſelf obliged by his Commands, altho' the Sword of Juſtice hang not over his Head to affright him into Obedience. There is a *Right to Obedience* where there

there is no Power of Compulſion. That the *Church* hath this Right of laying an Obligation upon all Chriſtians, is manifeſt, Serm. 4.

1. From the Reaſon of the thing. The *Church* muſt be furniſhed with all thoſe *Powers* which are neceſſary to her Preſervation. In vain did our Saviour found a *Society*, deſtitute of Means to preſerve it ſelf in Being, ſince all *Political Bodies*, as well as Natural, are ſubject to ſuch Diſtempers, which, not cured, will cauſe a Diſſolution. It is as much included in the Nature of this *Eccleſiaſtical* Body, that it be endowed with Power to ſecure it ſelf, as it is of any *Temporal*. Our Saviour having promiſed, that *he will be with it always to the end of the World, that the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*, there are but two ways by which this Promiſe can be fulfilled; by a conſtant miraculous Providence, which is not to be expected, or by having furniſhed it with that *Authority*, which, put in Execution, is of its own Nature able to preſerve it.

2. Conſi-

Serm. 4.

2. Conſider the Diſtinction of *Offices* and *Officers* which Chriſt hath inſtituted. Why did he proceed in the ſame natural Method uſed by all the Founders of Kingdoms and Societies? why did he chuſe *Apoſtles* and *Diſciples?* diſtinct Orders of *Biſhops, Prieſts and Deacons!* why appoint ſome *Prophets, ſome Evangeliſts, ſome Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints?* which *Paſtors* of his Church are not *Vicars* of the ſupream Powers, but act by Authority immediate from himſelf.

3. Conſider the *Titles* and *Acts* attributed to the *Officers* of the *Church.* ἐπίσκοποι, ποιμένες, ἡγούμενοι πρεσβῦτες, *Biſhops, Shepherds, Commanders*; all which, in their own Nature, as in the conſtant Uſe of the Words, imply a Power of *Governing.* They are alſo called *Embaſſadors*, becauſe they come in the Name and Authority of Chriſt, who ſent them. The *Council of Jeruſalem* did ſuppoſe it had a Right to command Obedience to its Decrees, when they ſay they will *lay no other Burden.* St. *Paul* tells the *Corinthians, the reſt will I ſet in order. Shall I come unto you with a Rod, or in the Spirit of Meekneſs?* There are other

other places which expreſsly contain that Duty and Obedience which the People owe unto their *Paſtors*. *Heb.* 13. 17. *Obey them that have Rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves.* Serm. 4.

But becauſe Matter of Fact cannot be denied, That the *Church Catholick*, till *Conſtantine*'s Time, did exiſt independent on the Empire, and did exerciſe all the Parts of Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction; great Pains is taken to make us believe, That it was not by any *Divine Inſtitution*, but in Vertue of a Confederacy, or mutual Agreement. But that the *Rulers* of the Church could not in any Probability uſurp that *Power*, had it not been granted by Chriſt, (beſides the Moral Impoſſibility, That the infinite Numbers of Chriſtians, diſperſed over the known World, ſhould unanimouſly agree to ſubmit themſelves to any one Form of Government, no Obligation lying upon them ſo to do) there are theſe Reaſons,

1. From the time when it is ſaid this Confederacy was made by all Chriſtians, to ſubmit themſelves to *Epiſcopal Government.*

Con-

Serm. 4. Concerning which time, (tho' all the Hiſtories of the Church be wholly ſilent) yet *Blondel* (the Learned *Adverſary* of Biſhops) is pleaſed to fix it in the Year of our Lord 136.

Now, of theſe Years St. *John* lived 99; *Ignatius*, who had perſonal Acquaintance with the Apoſtles, lived to the Year 107, and *Ireneus* ſurvived the whole Summ, who is ſo far from giving Notice of this univerſal Alteration, that he hath left us *Catalogues of Biſhops*, who ruled in the greateſt Churches from the Beginning.

2. If any ſuch Alteration had been, how comes it to paſs, That none of the *Hereticks*, who were cenſured, condemned and ſuppreſſed by this *Government*, did ever complain of ſo great an *Uſurpation?* Amongſt the numerous Sects, which cauſed ſo great Diſturbance in the ſecond and third Ages, not one of them found fault with the Authority, *Aerius* only excepted. They never accuſed it as not *Orthodox*, or not *Original*; but, in the Variety of Doctrinal Opinions, they ſtill obſerved the ſame Form of Diſcipline. *Hæc omnia, quæ ſunt propria Chriſti in veritate, habent & hæreſes*

hæreſes in Schiſmate, Similiter Scriptu-
ras, Similiter Epiſcopos, cæteroſq; Cleri- Serm. 4.
corum ordines. In all thoſe great *Schiſms* of the *Arrians*, *Novatians* and *Donatiſts*, they did not in the leaſt pretend to reform any thing in the Government of the Church: Whereas had it been ſo lately introduced by Human Conſent, how eaſy had it been for a diſcontented *Heretick* to have put the *Biſhops* in mind of the Novelty of their Power? how plauſible had it been to plead Exemption from their *Juriſdiction*, as not given by Chriſt, but, by Policy, extorted from the Conſent of the deluded People.

Surely ſo fair a Pretence would not have been neglected by thoſe Heads of Factions, who, by the Management of their other Affairs, appear to have wanted neither *Wit* nor Reſolution.

3. If we conſider thoſe Severities, which, according to the primitive Practice of Pennance, were inflicted upon Offenders, we cannot think, that the Authority, by which they were inflicted, was any thing leſs than Divine, eſtabliſhed by God himſelf: It being incredible, that Perſons ſhould ſubmit

to

Serm. 4. to ſeven, twelve, or twenty Years of Pain and Trouble; in ſome Caſes they were not abſolved till Death, and then when no external Force could compel them; had they not been perſwaded, that thoſe Hardſhips could no otherwiſe be avoided, than with the Hazard of their Souls. What intollerable Impudence had it been in St. *Ambroſe*, ſo highly to uſurp upon the Majeſty of the *Emperor*, had he had nothing but Human Pact to plead for himſelf! nor was *Theodoſius* a Prince of ſo tame a Spirit, as, upon no better Reaſon, to have ſubmitted.

From theſe Conſiderations, it ſeems manifeſt, That the *Church* was believed to have a *Power inherent* and *diſtinct from the Civil State*; which they who deſpiſe in this World, are not ſure what the Effects will be in the next. And that the Church hath no Reaſon to reſign up that Right, with which, upon many Reaſons, ſhe believes ſhe is empowered by Chriſt himſelf.

4. Divine Providence hath provided for the Security of Chriſtian Truth, by the Concurrence of the *Holy Spirit* to the

the Efficacy of the *Sacraments* and *Ordinances* of the Church. Serm. 4.

They certainly rob us of the greateſt Comforts of Chriſtianity, not only who deny all Influences and Aſſiſtances of the *Divine Spirit*, but they alſo, who acknowledge no other Effects of Grace than that Providence hath placed us in ſuch Circumſtances of Life, as have in them more or leſs Advantages to Vertue. But here we may ſafely ſpare all Diſpute, and reſt our ſelves upon the Appeal to the Senſe and Experience of every pious Mind, who, in the Courſe of his religious Life, hath ſurely received ſtronger Evidences of Divine Aſſiſtance, and burned with a greater Heat than could poſſibly proceed from ſo imaginary a Fire as the former Notion paints it. There is a more preſent Help of this *Spirit*, and nearer Approaches of its refreſhing Heat: Not like that *Elementary* Fire which *Philoſophy*, having vainly placed under the *Moon*, hath made it wholly uſeleſs to this inferiour World, but, as the *Sun*, it warms the Heart of every pious Chriſtian, like the Flames of that *eternal Furnace* which of Old did burn in Holy *Sinai*. The Mind whom ſincere Endeavours, devout Intenti-

Serm. 4. Intentions, and unfeigned Love of God hath rendred capable to receive the Influxes of this *Holy Spirit*, feels its more especial Presence, whereby it is promoted in Goodness, comforted in Afflictions, and delivered out of all Temptations. As *Elisha's Staff* was in vain applied to recall the Soul into the Body of the Child, the Prophet himself must come in Person, and *stretch himself* upon the Corps:

Pectora pectoribus jungens, atq; oribus ora.

And then the Blood begins to move, the Heart to beat, and the decayed Principles of Life are excited to inform the cold Carcase with the same Vigour as before: So it is in the New Birth, the Beginning, and Progress of a Spiritual Life. In this *second Creation*, as in the *first*, the *Holy Spirit* moves upon the Waters of *Baptism*, forms the *Stamina*, produceth the more essential Parts; and most truly is every one said to be *regenerated*, when by Baptism he is incorporated into the Church of Christ, and entitled to all the Priviledges of the City: And, in the other Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*, it nourisheth and feeds this Heavenly Birth, and preserves it to eternal Life. These things

things are ſo clear to every good Man, that nothing could have made the Truth of them to be called in queſtion, had not the Conſequences, which naturally flow from the Doctrine of the Irreſiſtibility of Grace, been found of ſo dangerous or deſtructive a Nature to true Piety, that Men choſe rather wholly to deny all ſupernatural Aſſiſtance, than to admit *them*, thinking that the true Nature of *Vertue and Vice*, with the Precepts and Rewards concerning them, would be better ſecured by the ſole *Free Will* in Man, than any *Hypotheſis* wherein Fatality muſt be included. But neither of theſe ways is the Faith which the Scriptures teach, or we believe and preach. Serm. 4.

That *Ordinance* of the Church wherein the Concurrence of the Spirit doth chiefly exert it ſelf in order to the Security of Chriſtian Truth, and proper to be mentioned on this occaſion, is, that of *Ordination* of a continued Succeſſion in the Evangelical *Prieſthood*. In which Caſe it was, that our Saviour ſaid expreſsly, (*Joh.* 20. 22.) *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt*. Nor ought it to ſeem ſtrange, that the *Church* ſhould ſtill retain that Form of Words, if we conſi-

der that the *Jews* always believed the
Serm. 4. *Shecina* or Divine Influence to deſcend upon him, who was thought worthy of their *Semica*, or *Impoſition of Hands*. Which Ceremony a Learned *Jew* obſerves, was begun by God himſelf, when he *covered* Moſes *with his Hand in the Mount*, (Exod. 33. 22.) *Moſes*, by the like *laying on of Hands*, communicated of his Spirit to *Joſhuah*, which was without Interruption obſerved to the time of our Saviour, who about to lay the Foundation of a better Church, and finding the Power of *Ordination* ſolely in the *Naſs* or *Prince* of the *Sanhedrim*, inſtated it likewiſe in the *Apoſtles* and *Biſhops*, their Succeſſors, ever excluding the *Presbyter* from that *Prerogative*. And this legitimate *Ordination of Paſtors* by the Biſhop, hath ever been eſteemed ſo neceſſary to the Being of a Church, that all the Efficacy of Sacraments, as to the eſtabliſhed Method of God in giving his Grace, hath been believed to depend upon it. And I have not found one undiſputable Inſtance, in all Antiquities, of an *Ordination* by *Presbyters* allowed by the *Church*. What *Neceſſity* is, and how far it will excuſe, God is Judge. We of this Church

Church do thank God, that we can prove a Succeſſion better and more certain than the *Church* of *Rome* can, and have ſolidly anſwered all her Objections from this *Topick*, whereby ſhe endeavours to *unchurch* us. That there is no new *Character* in the Ordination of a *Biſhop*, only an Extenſion of the former, received in Prieſthood, is an Invention of the *Schools*, in Flattery to the *Pope*, in order to the Degradation of the whole Order of *Biſhops*; and of which he hath made great Advantage. Serm. 4.

If there be any Truth in *Hiſtory*, any Uſe of Writers, any Faith in Men, or any Probability in any thing leſs than Demonſtration, we are as ſure of this Succeſſion as all theſe can make us. If there happen to be ſome *Hiatus* Breach, that the Names of one or two *Biſhops* (by that Fate which accompanies all Antiquity) cannot be retrieved, ſhall we therefore conclude there was none at all? Was there no *Aſſyrian Monarchy*, becauſe Chronology cannot ſupply the third part of its *Emperors*, nor Hiſtory tell any of their Actions? What can be ſaid to thoſe *Diptychs*, (like the *Conſular* Tables) wherein the Name of every *Biſhop*, from the Foundation of

Serm. 4. every particular *Church*, was carefully recorded, and the whole Series of the Succeſſion was at ſet times commemorated with Solemnity and Thankſgiving?

I will only add an Obſervation of the *Jews*, That upon the Ceſſation of Promotions, by *Impoſition of Hands*, amongſt them, immediately followed the total Ruin of all *Rabinical Rule and Juriſdiction.*

4. The laſt Work of the *Holy Spirit* providing for the Security of Chriſtian Truth, is its Guidance and Protection of this Church in difficult Caſes and afflictive Conditions.

This is manifeſt in the *Council of Jeruſalem*, aſſiſted by the *Holy Ghoſt*, in the Determination of thoſe Controverſies which had already bred ſome Diſturbance, and might have proceeded to greater Inconvenience. And it ſeems highly reaſonable, that the Governors of the Church, aſſembled out of pure Intentions for the Security of Peace and Truth, may expect Direction from that *Spirit*, whoſe Office it is to teach the Humble his Ways, and to guide the Meek in *Judgment.*

Every

Every *Conventicle*, tho' called together upon the moſt unjuſt Deſigns, hath conſtantly pretended to *Divine Illumination.* A *politick Council*, a *furious Synod*, a *Schiſmatical Aſſembly*, or a *private Preacher*, have been as familiar with this *Divine Spirit*, and as bold to invocate its Aſſiſtance, as ever any *Heathen Poet* was, with his ἔνεστε μῦσα, or ἄνασσε Θεά. Serm. 4.

Tho' I cannot believe any actual *Infallibility* in the *Church* ſince the Apoſtles time, yet there are Promiſes of an Aſſiſtance to the *Church* ſufficient to its Preſervation: For if the *Church* muſt continue to the *end*, ſhe muſt be preſerved from Error in Fundamentals; otherwiſe ſhe would not be a *Church.* When our Saviour ſaid, *The Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*, it is too languid an Interpretation, which makes it only a Promiſe of a Reſurrection, a Deliverance from the Power of Death. The *Gates* of a City are its Security, there ſat the *Courts of Judicature.* Chriſt therefore ſignified, That the Power and Policy of the *Kingdom of Darkneſs* ſhould never be able to deſtroy it. Beſides, he ſpeaks of a *Church* Organized, built up of *Members* fitted together into

a Body, governed by *Laws* appointed
Serm. 4. by *himſelf*, or his *Authority*: But a Reſurrection reſpects only particular Perſons, not a Society; and in Heaven there are no Degrees of *Officers*, as in the *Church Militant* on Earth.

If to a firm Adherence to the Holy Scriptures, we join thoſe Powers and that Authority which Chriſt hath inveſted in his *Church*, we ſhall find no occaſion for that *Infallibility*, which we have no Reaſon to believe; for according to St. *Cyprian*'s *recedente Diſciplina, recedit & Gratia*, the Grace of God will accompany the due Exerciſe of that Diſcipline; the great part of which was, the Decrees of *Councils*, for the preſerving the *Unity* of *Faith*, in the Condemnation of Hereſies. And if *Conſtantine* was the firſt Inventor of a *General Council*, as one ſays he was, (tho' indeed he followed the Example of the *Amphyctæones* in *Greece* long before our Saviour) it was a noble Invention, and of admirable Uſe for the Preſervation of Chriſtian Faith, and we are all obliged to his Wiſdom.

Certainly St. *James*, upon the Strength of that Inſpiration which he had, could have decided thoſe Controverſies at *Jeruſalem*;

ruſalem; yet did he chuſe to do it by the Solemnity of a *Council*: A great Example. Serm. 4.

The Promiſes of Protection Chriſt hath made, have two Limitations:

1. They are no where made to any *Church* of particular Denomination, but to the *Catholick*. The Truth of them is ſtill preſerved inviolate, notwithſtanding the calamitous Eſtate of ſome particular *Churches*.

Tho' the Churches of *Aſia*, once renowned for their Faith and Piety, have for ſome Ages groaned under *Turkiſh Tyranny*: Tho' *Carthage*, a long time Rival both to Heathen and Chriſtian *Rome*, with all other *Churches* of *Africa*, famous for Zeal and Diſcipline, are now no where to be ſeen: Tho' even the *Church* of *Rome*, once the great Glory of *Catholick Faith*, hath a long time been, and continues deeply corrupted and degenerate, yet the *Foundation of God ſtandeth ſure*, and the *Holy Spirit of Truth*, like the Soul of the univerſal Church, whilſt it withdraws from dead and putrid Members, will ever actuate the living healthful Parts.

Serm. 4. 2. The Promiſes of God's ſpecial Protection and great Deliverance given to his *Church*, are not Promiſes of a perpetual proſperous State; but ſuppoſe a State of Affliction and Perſecution, which ſhe muſt ſometimes be under. God hath not ſaid the *Church* ſhall never be diſtreſſed, but that he will comfort and ſupport her under Afflictions, and when they have attained the End for which they were ſent, he will *deliver her* out of them.

The two famous *Propheſies of Daniel*, and the *Revelation*, cannot eaſily admit of any other Interpretation. The firſt was writ to inſpire the *Jews* with Conſtancy under the cruel Perſecution of *Antiochus*, with the Promiſe of Deliverance by the *Maccabees*. The ſecond was given to ſupport the Chriſtians under the Bloody Tyranny of near 300 Years, both from the *Jews* and *Heathen* Roman *Emperors*, till at length, by the Deſtruction of both theſe *Enemies*, the Kingdoms of this World (by the Edict of *Conſtantine*) ſhould become the Kingdoms of Chriſt, and he ſhould reign with his Saints gloriouſly. Hence we have ſtrong Conſolation, that God, in ways which his Wiſdom ſhall think beſt,

beſt, will not forſake his *Church*, but always preſerve it in being, Comfort and direct it, and in his good time crown it with Deliverances. Serm. 4.

Theſe ſeem to me the ſteady, regular ways whereby the *Holy Spirit* guides the World into Truth, far more intelligible than the private Inſpirations of thoſe, who, with great Confidence, pretend to them.

The *Characters* of this Truth, are chiefly theſe;

1. It is a derived Truth, in Oppoſition to *Novelty*. There is a *Preſcription* in Spirituals, as in Temporals, which *Tertullian* hath excellently managed againſt the *Hereticks* of his Time; and true Reaſon will ever be the ſame. *Edant ergo Origines Eccleſiarum ſuarum.* Let the *Schiſmaticks* of our Times produce the *Originals* of their particular *Churches*, when, and by what Authority they were founded in Oppoſition to the *Catholick*. All know the Father of *Presbytery*; and I account *Socinus* the firſt *Independent*; he found it neceſſary to withdraw himſelf from a *Juriſdiction*, to which his *Hereſies* had made him obnoxious. But as to *Epiſcopacy*, it hath

a

Serm. 4. a *Preſcription Immemorial* antecedent to all Hiſtory: For certainly St. *Paul* had made *Biſhops* before he tells us that he had.

It is too much Confidence to expect, that the eſtabliſhed Conſtitutions of Heaven ſhould alter their Courſe after the Projects of a weak Imagination. Wilt thou be ſo Wiſe as to invent a better *Chriſtianity?* They are the ſettled Principles of Faith, which have experienced Storms, and ſtood invincible againſt all Aſſaults, upon which the true Religion is ſuſtained.

2. It is a plain, intelligible, eaſy Truth, in Oppoſition to Niceties and Subtilties. Our Saviour tells his Diſciples, That he *would ſpeak to them no more in Parables.* We need not torment our Minds firſt in making, and then in ſolving anxious Difficulties. Chriſtian Truth, as much as is neceſſary, is eaſy, if not to be underſtood, yet to be believed. *Nobis non opus eſt curioſitate poſt Jeſum Chriſtum: Curioſity, after Revelation, is impertinent.*

There have been many as plauſible Fancies as thine, which have, for a while, amuſed the World, deluded unſteady

ſteady Minds; but are now either quite forgotten, or elſe what we know of them is, that they were confuted by Men more Learned than their Authors, condemned by the *Church*, and remain noted with the eternal Infamy of *Hereſy*, and Schiſmatical Ignorance. Remember St. *Hierom*'s Words; *Sine his mundus erat Chriſtianus.* There was more of true Piety and Religion before theſe Extravagancies bent Mens Endeavours from Practice to Diſpute, from the Proſecution of Realities to jejune, aerial Contemplations. Serm. 4.

It is not enough to ſay, *Paralogiſmus meus non eſt ſuum damnum: My Hereſy hurts no Body*; for every one hath a Right to Truth, and it is injurious to impoſe an Error.

3. It is a peaceable *Truth*, being no other than that *Wiſdom which deſcendeth from above.*

Our *Saviour*'s Intentions were not to lay the Deſign of ſome petty City, which at firſt being encircled with a *Bull's Hide*, or trenched with a *Plow*, ſhould by good Fortune and great Injuſtice, by much Cruelty, and Invaſions upon the Rights of others, grow up into

Serm. 4. into a dreadful Tyranny, oppreſs and afflict Mankind a little while, give *Laws of Conqueſt* to a ſmall part of the World, and by and by decline, vaniſh, and puzzle Hiſtory and Chronology, to find either its Cradle or its Grave, when it began, how it flouriſhed, or when it ended: But the Intent of that Truth, whereof we ſpeak, was, to unite whole Mankind into one *Monarchy*, to captivate their Underſtandings and Wills to the Obedience of the ſame Divine Law, to the Service of the ſame moſt benign Lord and Maſter.

The *Chriſtian Church*, as by our Saviour founded, by the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors propagated thro' the World, is not ſolely united, either by the Belief of ſome Sentences, as the *Schools* of the *Philoſophers* were, nor by the Obſervation of ſome *Rites and Ceremonies*, like the Heathen Churches, nor by the ſame Form of Government, as ſome Kingdoms are: But its Unity is made up of all theſe together.

It is *Error* hath created a *Geography* of Religions, as there is of Countries. There are more Diviſions in that which is called *Chriſtendom*, than there are *Climes* or *Parallels*. There is a *Torrid Zone*

Zone, which deals ſo much in Flames and Fire, that it is become uninhabitable by the *true Religion*: And there is a *Frigid Zone*, where Piety is ſtiff, moroſe and rigid, and every Spark of Chriſtian Charity quite extinguiſhed. There the vehement Deſire of *External Pomp* and Worldly Politicks have heated it into a Fever: Here a *Stoical Belief*, with a *Phariſaick Self-love*, hath benumbed it into a Lethargick Inactivity to all true Chriſtian Vertue. Happy are we, the Members of that *reformed Church*, which (like the temperate Situation of the *Iſland* ſhe inhabits) retains the vertuous Mean, betwixt thoſe wide and dangerous *Extreams*. Serm. 4.

4. It is a Truth of Purity and Holineſs. *A Holy Faith*, the Doctrine according to *Godlineſs*.

No *Article* of our *Creed*, no *Ordinance* of our Church, no *Ceremony* or Circumſtance of our Religion, which was not deſigned for, and tendeth not to the promoting of real Piety. The Doctrine of the *Holy Trinity* (to which, with a particular Solemnity, we this Day pay our Adoration) is not only a Myſtery impoſed for no Uſe but to rack

Serm. 4.

rack our Reaſon, and baffle all Human Underſtanding, to exerciſe bold Wits in thoſe mutinous Attempts againſt the *Great Article* of the *Catholick Faith*; as, were it not for the primitive Zeal of a few *Athanaſius*'s, (whom God had raiſed up, and he preſerves) might give juſt Cauſe to fear an *Apoſtacy* from Chriſtianity: But, if we well conſider, we ſhall find that of St. *Hierom* moſt true; *Salus credentium eſt myſterium Trinitatis: The Salvation of Mankind is a good Proof of the Trinity.*

Since the Death of a meer Man could not have had ſo great a *Merit*, the Satisfaction not have been ſo efficacious to our *Redemption*: And ſo great Salvation, accompliſhed by Methods ſo extraordinary, was intended to make in us proportionable Impreſſions of Devotion, and ſincere Obedience; which that it may do,

The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, &c.

The End of the Fourth Sermon.

SERMON V.

St. Matthew V. 44.

But I ſay unto you, Love your Enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you.

TO have no Enemies, happens to very few or none in this Life; to have many, is the Lott of good Men; and the better they are, often the more Enemies they have; for God himſelf, infinite Goodneſs, hath the moſt of all.

So then the moſt perfect Vertue cannot be but the Foundation of the Friendſhip of this World. Our *Saviour* therefore might well ſuppoſe, that his Diſciples, who had little elſe to recommend them, being deſtitute of all that external Splendor and Earthly Gaieties, (the conſtant Attractives of falſe Love, and

Serm. 5. and baſe Flattery) would walk up and down the World as neglected or deſpiſed parts of Mankind. Their Minds indeed were richly ſtored with all thoſe truly amiable Qualifications which might deſerve the Love of all Men, and juſtly challenge their moſt ſincere Affections: Yet (as the World ever was) would they find no other Entertainment from it, but ſuch as would make them wrap themſelves up in their own Vertue, and reſt content with their pious Poverty. But if no Antidotes will prevent the Diſeaſe, the Skill of the Phyſician muſt ſhew it ſelf in enabling his Patient to endure it with as much eaſe as may be, ſo as may leaſt diſturb the Pleaſure of his Life; which is the Intent of this Advice of our Saviour in the Text.

The Principles of my Doctrine, (ſaith he to his perſecuted Auditors) if they be heartily entertained into your Souls, and be permitted to have the Government of your Affections, are in their Nature ſo deſirable, that they tend to make the whole World your Friends, deſigned on purpoſe to make all Men happy, by informing them with an univerſal Spirit of Love, Meekneſs, Humility, and all thoſe milder Vertues, which,

which, one would think, ſhould never find thoſe Enemies, which it is impoſſible they ſhould make by any kind of Cauſality: Yet will you meet, amongſt the Generality of Mankind, ſo diſtempered a Conſtitution of Mind, as will turn the moſt ſalutary Food into its own corrupt, depraved Nature. You are to converſe with an ungrateful World, that will ſhut its Eyes againſt the Brightneſs of your Behaviour, ſtop its Ears to the powerful Charms of your tranſcendent Goodneſs, make the ſweeteſt Converſation an occaſion of the bittereſt Hatred, and will not be engaged by the Purity of my Religion to any thing but Fury and Perſecution. Enemies you muſt have, notwithſtanding all the Obligations of your Doctrine and your Life. I give you therefore the beſt Rules to free your ſelves from that Diſquiet and Anxiety which an ingenuous Mind is apt to be affected with from the unnatural Returns of Ingratitude. The beſt way to ſteer your Courſe, to ſecure your own Tranquility in this troubleſome Sea of ungodly Men, which ſtill vomits up Mire and Dirt, is, *Love your Enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you.* Serm. 5.

Serm. 5. Which Precept of our Saviour, however Divine, and of eternal Truth, however conducing to the univerſal Good of the World, and to the Happineſs of every private Mind, hath always been accounted a *hard Saying*, very difficult, and treated as wholly impracticable. In his Time it was quite obſcured by the falſe Gloſſes of the Scribes, and the killing Interpretations of Phariſaical Pride, ill Nature, and a faſtuous Contempt of others. In our Days an *Unphiloſophical Hypotheſis* hath moſt injuriouſly and ſcandalouſly tranſformed the State of Nature (originally made up of pure Innocence) into a *State of eternal War*, whereby all generous Goodneſs is baniſhed Earth, and every Divineſt Vertue pluckt from its rightful Throne by Gigantick Force and Power.

But let us ſee how, by what Methods the Holy *Jeſus*, the Great Reſtorer and Aſſerter of the Law of Nature, hath raiſed and refined this Duty in the Text, to its original Purity and Perfection.

1. Therefore when Chriſt commands us to *Love our Enemies*, he doth not intend to bind us only to a negative Duty;

ty; not only that we ſhould not hate them that hate us, not curſe them that curſe us, or not to return Ill to them that do Ill to us, (which yet we wiſh the World were arrived to:) This was forbidden in the foregoing Verſes, where our Saviour reckoning up three ſorts of injuries, to which all are liable from malicious Men, *to their Bodies*, *to their Eſtates*, and *to their Liberty*, he clearly lays down thoſe Rules whereby a good Chriſtian is bound to govern himſelf in every of thoſe afflictive Circumſtances; which, becauſe they contain a full Deſcription of that Patience which ſo eminently ſhewed it ſelf in his Life and Sufferings, which he hath made the indiſpenſable Duty of all his Followers, and have ſo near Relation to the Great Command of the Text, I ſhall chiefly from *Grotius* give a brief Explanation of them. Serm. 5.

1. Verſe 39. In Reference to Injuries done to the Body or Dignity: *But I ſay unto you, Reſiſt not Evil.* By Evil is meant the bad Man, who doth the Injury; and according to the general Acceptation of the Word ἀνθίστημι, Chriſtians are forbidden.

Serm. 5. 1. All private Revenge, when we are injured, to make any Return. This was reputed even by ſome of the Phiſoſophers, a great part not only of a *Stoical* Inſenſibility, but of the trueſt Magnanimity. *Revenge*, ſaid *Seneca*, *is a monſtrous Word*; *he who doth it*, *doth but a little more excuſeably ſin.* Another diſcourſes higher, and determines, *That he who revengeth*, *is a worſe Man than he from whom he received the Injury.*

2. This Command of our Saviour clearly reſpects that kind of Revenge which is commonly eſteemed leſs immodeſt or turbulent. It ſuffers not to ſeek for Satisfaction of ſmall Injuries from the lawful Magiſtrate, in a Courſe of legal Juſtice: For Chriſt forbids that very thing, which God by *Moſes*, tho' he did not explicitly approve of, yet did he permit, to prevent a greater Inconvenience. The Law of *Retaliation*, *Eye for Eye*, and *Tooth for Tooth*, was never intended to be executed literally, but was interpreted both by the *Jews* and *Romans* to be ſatisfied by a pecuniary Mulct: The Intention was, by all probable ways to ſtop the Deſire of Revenge. Chriſt hath taught us a new kind

kind of Patience, ſaid *Tertullian*; and how the primitive Chriſtians put it in Practice, is manifeſt from the Appeals they made to their Enemies in this particular. *Julian*, who had learnt the Opinions of the Chriſtians, forbad his Judges to receive their Complaints, giving for a Reaſon, *It is your Religion to ſuffer Injuries. Becauſe it is a great Maxim, whereby the fooliſh World ſtill pleads the Cauſe of Revenge, That by tollerating one Injury, you invite another*, our Saviour immediately anſwers that Objection, making uſe of a proverbial Speech, (*Lam.* 3. 30.) *To turn the Cheek to him that ſmiteth you:* Whereby he commands rather to receive a ſecond Injury than to revenge the firſt; firmly believing, that he who hath thus tied your Hands, will himſelf, in his own time, vindicate your Innocence. *Avenge not your ſelves, but rather give place to Wrath*, patiently expecting the Judgment of God. Serm. 5.

2. As to Injuries done to your Eſtate, the Goods of Fortune, (Verſ. 40.) Chriſt's Command is, *If any Man will ſue thee at the Law, and take away thy Coat, let him have thy Cloak alſo.* Which likewiſe

likewiſe is Proverbial, (*Micah* 2. 8.) by
Serm. 5. which we are obliged not to ſeek a Remedy for a tollerable Injuſtice, and eaſily reparable; not to contend in Judgment, but to lay aſide the Proſecution of our Right, tho' by ſuch pacifick Means we incur the Danger of a greater Loſs.

The Law is *juſt and good*, and if there were not ſuch Appeal, the World would ſoon become a Wilderneſs of wild Beaſts, each one living upon Rapine, and the Ruin of another: The beſt Men would be a Prey to the worſt: Strength and Cunning would give Being to Injuſtice, and make Property. St. *Paul* calls the going to Law of Chriſtians one with another, not ἁμάρτημα, but ἥττημα; a Defect, not a Sin: Becauſe tho' it may be eſteemed the part of a High and Great Mind, rather to looſe his Right than to proſecute it at Law; yet there was no univerſal Command of Chriſt for ſuch Magnanimity. He who calls the Law to his Aſſiſtance for a Matter of conſiderable value, in Defence of the Widow and the Fatherleſs, to provide for his Family, to recover his Goods out of the Claws of ravenous Wolves, that he may have to give to the

Poor

Poor and Needy, with a ſteady Reſo- Serm. 5.
lution to receive the Deciſion of the
Judge with good Temper and Acquieſ-
cence; cannot be thought in the leaſt
to offend againſt Chriſtian Charity, or
any Law of Chriſt.

Indeed if we reflect upon ſome things which do commonly accompany *Law Suits*, and with the greateſt part of Men are never ſeparate from them, an exulcerated Mind, full of Revenge, cunning Artifices, *tedious Prolongations*, rooted Hatreds, *great Expences of Time, Money and Thought*, which might be employed in better Buſineſs; we muſt acknowledge, that a good and prudent Man would free himſelf from ſuch Anxieties (great Diſturbers of Tranquility) by any tollerable Agreement, in Matters of ſmall Conſideration, as in the Inſtances of our Saviour.

In the firſt and beſt Times of our Religion, Chriſtians, who did not then, as now, ſo ſubtilly diſtinguiſh betwixt Counſels and Commands, but always embraced what was moſt perfective, did not go to Law to recover their Goods againſt Law taken from them, as *Athenagoras* teſtifies.

Serm. 5. But as the World, called *Chriſtian*, now ſtands, he that ſhall make ſuch a Reſolution, will do wiſely to keep it to himſelf, cloſe in his own Breaſt.

3. *Whoſoever ſhall compel thee to go a Mile, go with him twain.* When the *Perſian* Arms had conquered the *Eaſt*, amongſt other Hardſhips of Servitude which they impoſed, one was, to force Men, as Horſes, to carry Burdens from one Stage to another; which, in Uſage of Time, came to expreſs any kind of Invaſion upon Liberty.

So that as before our *Saviour* had commanded to receive a ſecond Affront to the Body, and a greater Loſs in our Eſtates, in this his Will is, That we undergo a double Labour eaſily, tollerable, tho' unjuſtly impoſed, rather than vindicate our Liberty privately or publickly, or any ways offend againſt the Laws of Chriſtian Patience.

Yet are we not hence forbid by all pacate and placid Means to ſhake off that Yoke which ſo enſlaves us, and deprives us of that Liberty neceſſary to the Performance of many Offices of great Advantage to our ſelves and Mankind.

4. *Laſtly*,

4. *Laſtly*, Our Saviour lays down general Rules of Beneficence: *Give to them that ask*, to the Poor and Neceſſitous. *From him that would borrow of thee turn not away*: Who, tho' he be not in the Number of ſuch, from whom thou canſt not expect to receive thine own again, yet in ſome preſent Streight and Exigence wants thy Aſſiſtance. Which Rule muſt be limited by our Capacities and their Neceſſities. We are commanded to be *liberal* not *prodigal*. Becauſe the Eſtates of particular Men are but ſmall, and the Number of thoſe who want, infinite, the Advice of *Ennius* ought ever to be remembred. Serm. 5.

The Charitable Man

(Quaſi lumen de ſuo lumine accendat facit, Nihil ominus ut ipſi luceat qui accenderit.)

will let others light at his Candle, but ſo that it may give light unto himſelf. Be liberal to all, but yet reſerve for your ſelves and Friends a Capacity of doing Benefits. It will ever be *more bleſſed to give, than to receive.*

You ſee how our Saviour hath ſtript Morality of all its Viſors; and by how many Steps and Degrees he hath led his Diſciples to the Perfection of Chriſtian Charity.

Serm. 5. Charity. They are all built upon, and aſcend from a profound *Humility:* Not to think our ſelves ſo Good, or ſo Great, that every little Injury or Indignity muſt be purſued with utmoſt Revenge. He hath now taught us wherein true Greatneſs of Spirit doth conſiſt: Not in that *Softneſs and Delicacy* which nothing muſt touch but we are all on Fire, (which the vain World ſo glories in) but in enduring with Fortitude, Injuries, Reproaches, Loſſes: Not to be ſhaken from our Rock, our Firmneſs of Mind by all the Aſſaults of Rudeneſs, Injuſtice and Barbarity. This is true *Magnanimity*, which the Wiſdom of *Philoſophy* ever admired, made laborious Searches after, and in a wonderful meaſure did attain unto.

But the Love of *Enemies* never was any part of their Speculations; they rather thought it a Fault, as contradictory to the Laws of Juſtice, as to hate a Friend. This utmoſt Perfection of Nature and Religion, was reſerved for the laſt and beſt Revelation.

The *Jews*, before the Captivity of *Babylon*, did not diſcover that Averſion to Strangers of other Nations, as appears they had afterwards, and in the time

time of our Saviour. Their Law expreſsly (*Deut.* 23. 7.) forbids them to abhor an *Edomite*, or an *Egyptian*. *Joſephus* brings in *Solomon*, at the Dedication of the Temple, where he prays God, that there he would hear *the Prayers of Strangers*, ſaying, ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἀπάνθρωποι, *We are not Inhuman towards Strangers.* And accordingly the ancient *Jews* offered Prayers, with *Sacrifices*, not only for their own People, but for all Mankind, (as *Philo* obſerves) even for the *Romans*, their conquering Maſters. But in after-times, whether out of Reſentment of the Hardſhips they had endured from the Nations, or an encreaſing Conceit of their own Holineſs, which too much poſſeſſed them, they grew ſo unnaturally *moroſe*, that many of the *Heathen Writers* have taken notice of it. And in the *New Teſtament* we read, that they would not συγχρῆσθαι, συνεσθίειν, προσέρχεσθαι, have any *Familiarity with a Stranger.* That this was not the Intention of their Law, our *Saviour* ſhews, when he asked Water of the *Samaritan Woman*, who was himſelf moſt obſervant of the Law. So that he, in this part of his Divine Sermon, intends to vindicate the Law of Nature, Serm. 5.

and

Serm. 5. and of *Moſes*, from the falſe Gloſſes of the *Phariſees*, (a late Sect amongſt the *Jews*) whereby they did not interpret, but corrupt and contradict them both. He ſhews them, that no Man is excluded from their Love and Beneficence; and that there is no greater Victory than when an Injury begins from another, a Benefit begins from us.

1. That we wiſh our Enemy all the Good in the World of his Body, more eſpecially of his Soul. His utmoſt Malice ſhould never provoke us to do him any Hurt as to this Life, much leſs to purſue him with Curſes into the other. We ought to pray, That God would convince him of his Sin, and give him Grace to Amendment.

2. That we pity him, as being in a dangerous Condition, becauſe his being our Enemy implies a *real Sin.*

3. From good Affections, we muſt proceed to good Words, as from Words to Deeds. We muſt be ſo far from ſpeaking Evil, or return unfriendly Language for his unjuſt Railings, that we are bound to commend whatever is Praiſe

Praiſe worthy in him, to hide his Vices, and divulge his Vertues: For he cannot be ſaid to perform the Office of a Friend to any, (which is to love him) whoſe Failings he publiſhes upon all occaſions, making his Vices or his Follies the Subject of his Diſcourſes; which however it be little taken notice of in common Converſations, which are frequently filled with ſatyrical Narrations, or facetious Stories of Perſons, and the Actions of thoſe we take Pleaſure to traduce, (as if we were pleaſed that Sins are committed, that is, that God is diſhonoured, and Immortal Souls in danger of eternal Ruin) yet is it certainly a great Breach of, and contrary to this and many other Precepts of the Chriſtian Law; the Method preſcribed by our Saviour being friendly Admonition in private, and prudent Dehortation from his Sin. Serm. 5.

But in this, the great *Pravity* of Human Nature betrays it ſelf, that we find a ſort of Delight in hearing or relating the Sins and Imperfections of others, (tho' it is poſſible, and in Charity we are bound to believe, they have repented) not conſidering how loath our ſelves are that they ſhould make Sport

in

in rehearſing a Catalogue of the Errors
Serm. 5. of our Life, or proclaim our Deficiencies in all Societies.

4. That we do all the Duties of Charity. If thine Enemy be hungry, feed him; if naked, cloath him; if in Diſtreſs, comfort and relieve him by thy beſt Advice, and all other proper Means thou canſt.

Theſe great, moſt excellent Duties of a Chriſtian, which I have hitherto diſcourſed, our Saviour perſwades and encourages unto the Performance of, by the following Arguments; which, when we have well conſidered, I truſt, we ſhall not look upon theſe Commands of Forgiving, Loving, and doing Good to Enemies, either as impoſſible to be obeyed, or as pieces of a Romantick Body of Law, fit only for a *Platonick* or *Utopian Common-wealth*, never intended to be put in Execution.

1. He propoſeth to our Imitation the Example of *God*, Verſ. 45. *That you may be the Children of your Father which is in Heaven; that you may be like* unto him, *who makes his Sun to riſe upon the Evil and the Good, and ſendeth Rain on the*

the Juſt and the Unjuſt. All the Bene-
fits of Life, and Well-being in the Serm. 5.
World, are diſtributed by an impartial Providence, which overlooks all our Failings and Injuries we daily offer to the Author, and fills its wonted Channels with freſh and conſtant Supplies to our Neceſſities. If we enquire into the Condition of the worſt of Men upon Earth, how great a ſhare of good things they are ſupplied with, thoſe who by wilful and perpetuated Sins make themſelves ever obnoxious to Divine Juſtice, into what pleaſant places their Lot is fallen, have a greater ſhare of the beſt of Life than the Good and Vertuous; as we cannot ſeverely cenſure the ſurprizing Offence that pious Minds have ſometimes taken, ſo is ſuch pardoning Goodneſs a glorious Pattern to our Imitation. It hath ever been made the trueſt End of the beſt Philoſophy, ὁμοιωθῆναι τῷ Θεῷ, to make us like unto God, whoſe Great Attribute it is to do Good.

Infinite Power in it ſelf is terrible, exact Juſtice will make the moſt perfect Man tremble when he is Judged: Eternity of Exiſtence, Power irreſiſtible, Omniſcience, Omnipreſence, would not make

Serm. 5. make God the Object of our Love or Worſhip; ſince theſe Attributes render him capable to know all our Offences, and to Puniſh them. But from the daily Experience we have of his Goodneſs, we ſtrongly conclude, there are other Attributes of Commiſeration, and Mercy equally Eſſential of a Deity, and as to us, in ſome ſenſe more; ſince we feel continually the effects of his Goodneſs, but chiefly by our Reaſon are made to believe the other. God hath ever been Jealous of, and Puniſhed any pretences Men have made of his Power, but been well pleaſed, and rewarded the higheſt Imitation of his Goodneſs. If therefore we think it any Duty or Perfection, to be like the *greateſt Good*, Imitate him in theſe Communications. What worſe can the Devil do, than *return Evil*! But to do good for evil, is like God, and well becomes one who pretends to Worſhip him.

If at any time revengeful Nature begins to ſtir, and ſollicite thee, to ſtrike back the Stroaks thou haſt received with a redoubled Force. Let ſuch a Meditation put a ſtop to thy Fury, and cool the heat of Paſſion. Lord! How miſerable ſhould I be, if thou ſhouldeſt deal with

with me as I am now urged to deal with my Brother! What torments ſhould I endure, if thou ſhouldeſt take notice of half the Indignities my ſinful Life hath put on thee, thy Name and thy Religion! How ſhould I ſtand before thee! Thou laidſt down thy Life for me, who am thy greateſt Enemy; and ſhall I ſo little value thy Example, or ſo ill requite thy Love, as not to love him who is not capable of doing me the thouſandth part of thoſe injuries which I ſtand guilty of to thy Majeſty! Serm. 5.

Love thy Enemies, that thou mayeſt be like to God, which unleſs thou beeſt, thou canſt never ſee him.

Ἀιεὶ γὰρ τὸ ὅμοιον ἄγει θεὸς ἐις τὸ ὅμοιον.

God in all his Works gathers things alike together: *Come ye Bleſſed.* ----- *Depart from me ye Curſed.*

2. Love your Enemies; for (Verſ. 46.) *if ye love them that love you, do not even the Publicans the ſame?* This is a peculiar Precept of the Chriſtian Law: To this Height none but Chriſt could have explained the Law of Nature.

To forgive, or any thing leſs than love his Enemy, Heathens can do: And thou who profeſſeſt to acknowledge a

Serm. 5.

Diſpenſation far more excellent than any the World ever knew, who pretendeſt to imitate him who firſt brought this Doctrine from Heaven, and ſet the greateſt Example of it himſelf, wilt thou not be aſhamed to reſt content with ſo mean an Attainment as every one can arrive at, who never made ſuch Profeſſion?

The *Lacedemonians* added to their Prayers, τὸ ἀδικεῖσθαι δύνασθαι, That God would enable them to *bear Injuries*; and the *Eſſens* (from whom the Beginnings of Chriſtianity found the greateſt Harveſt among the *Jews*) had this Petition; *Remit and pardon all thoſe who vex us.* *Lucian* eſteemed a lame Peripatetick a great Abſurdity, a Contradiction to ſo honourable a Name by which he loved to be called: A malicious Chriſtian is a greater. If thou art a Chriſtian, do ſomething worthy of that glorious Title; ſomething which no other Sect did ever teach.

Every inferiour, and of baſeſt Education, can do his Endeavour to Revenge; every Coward can hate; but it is a *Prince*'s Greatneſs to pardon, and a *Chriſtian's to love his Enemy.* It is called Perfection in the laſt Verſe of this Chapter.

3. By loving our Enemies, we ſhall beſt ſecure our own Peace and Tranquility. Love is a placid, calm and quiet thing; it fills the Mind with ſuch a Serenity, which none, who is acquainted with it, will readily ſuffer any thing to bereave him of. *Chriſt's Yoke* is in every thing *eaſy*, and *his Burden is light*; but in this preſent Caſe it ſhews it ſelf ſo moſt apparently.

He whoſe Heart meditates Revenge, is always diſcompoſed, full of anxious Thoughts, ſollicitous Contrivances, rackt betwixt the Deſire of Revenge, and the Danger in the Execution: He prepares his Weapons, hides it under his Garment, makes uſe of the Darkneſs of Night; and when he hath ſatiated his Rage with the Blood of his Adverſary, fear of Temporal Laws makes him fly his Country, bereaves him of all Pleaſure in Worldly Conveniencies, and his Conſcience terrifies him with the Foretaſtes of eternal Puniſhment.

Galen, the Great Phyſician, was much troubled to ſee a Man in a *furious Paſſion*: He knew well, by his Skill in

Human Bodies, how it diſordered every
Serm. 5. Part; how irregular was the Motion of the Heart, how confuſed the Spirits, oppreſſed the Lungs, inflated and diſtorted the Muſcles, the Blood boiling, and the Nerves, by which the Machine is moved, have all loſt their due Spring and Extenſion. Theſe Diſorders, and many more, are viſible in little Animals, by the Help of Glaſſes: And *Plutarch* adviſes any one in great Paſſion to behold himſelf in a Glaſs, and conſider how he looks. Thoſe Diſeaſes are moſt dangerous which produce Alterations of the Countenance; whereby it appears to what a Streſs Nature is put by the Exceſs of Paſſions; and that they are by Phyſicians juſtly reckoned the worſt Enemies to the Health both of Mind and Body.

But, take the Advice of thy beſt Friend, and all is done; *Love thy Enemy*, and thou freeſt thy ſelf from much Inquietude, and retaineſt thy wonted Complacency. Why ſhould it be in the Power of my Adverſary, when he hath done me one Injury which I could *not help*, to give me more Trouble which I *can hinder?* He will applaud himſelf more in that inward Vexation he hath raiſed

raiſed in thee, than in the external Act; more in tormenting thy Mind, than in hurting thy Body: And where is the Wiſdom, that another Man ſhall be more Maſter over me than I am over my ſelf? Certain it is, a Man who ſtudies Revenge keeps his own *Wounds open*, which elſe would heal of themſelves. Serm. 5.

4. *Love your Enemies*; for this is the moſt probable way to overcome them. If it be your deſign to remain Conqueror, there is no ſurer way than to requite Diſcourteſies with good Turns. *To overcome Evil with Good, is to heap Coals* of Fire upon thine Enemy's Head: (as in Lethargick Perſons) unleſs he be quite dead, if there be any Spark of Love or generous Nature left, it will mollify his Hardneſs, reduce him to Senſe and Reaſon: Whereas if thou injureſt him, as he hath thee, will not he endeavour a ſecond or a third Return? What Hopes of conquering by *provoking*? it is but like the rebounding of a Ball betwixt the Hardneſs of two Walls, where the Reflection is continued till the Force be ſpent that gave it Motion: But if the ſame Ball be ſtruck

Serm. 5. againſt the ſofter Earth, there it ſtays, and lies embraced in the very Wound it made. *Let me periſh*, ſaid one, *if I kill thee not*; and, *Let me*, ſaid Zeno, *if I make thee not my Friend.* It was a noble Saying of a *Prince*, who exerciſed himſelf in this Art of Victory; *That by this means he killed the Enemy, and ſaved the Man alive.* A Diſtinction very uſeful for a Chriſtian. Goodneſs will ſlay the Enmity without the leaſt Hurt, but greateſt Good to the Perſon: And if thou haſt conquered that, what more wouldſt thou do? The Day is thine, the Man is thy Slave, he yields himſelf Captive to the Power of thy Goodneſs. The Conqueſt of the Heart gives the trueſt Victory. To kill the Body, is not to conquer. To urge thy Malice farther, is to be Inhuman to the Carcaſe, when the Spirit that informed it is fled away. Thy Vertue is more reſplendent here, and will receive a greater Reward hereafter. If by thy multiplying of Kindneſſes thou doeſt gain thy Adverſary, thou acquireſt a double Benefit; thou getteſt a Friend of a Foe, and mayſt expect the Reward due to him *who converts a Sinner from the Error of his way.*

5. Thou

5. Thou ſhalt hereby conquer not only the Enemy without, but a more dangerous one in thine own Boſom; overcome thy ſelf, carry away a glorious Conqueſt over thy Paſſions, the nobleſt Victory. Serm. 5.

It is the Opinion of St. *Hierom*, That St. *Paul* took that Name upon his Converſion of *Sergius Paulus*, the *Roman* Governor, to the Chriſtian Faith, as *Scipio* was called *Africanus*, and other Emperors *Parthicus*, *Sarmaticus*, *Brittanicus*, from the Countries which they conquered. If thou haſt conquered thy ſelf, thou deſerveſt the Title of Αυτοκράτωρ more than they; thou haſt done that which they, in their greateſt Triumphs, were not able to do, being ſtill Slaves to one Vice or other. Whoſoever hath ſo much the Maſter over himſelf, as to ſubdue this Paſſion, may well be preſumed to have all the reſt at command, and to be abſolute Monarch in his own *Soul*.

6. Love thine *Enemies*, for the Good thou doeſt, or may receive from them. This Reaſon will not, upon a little Conſideration, be accounted a Paradox. A wiſe Moraliſt hath writ an excellent

Serm. 5. Diſcourſe of the Benefits we may receive from our Enemies. 1. We are more upon our Guard, more watchful over our Words and Actions in the Preſence of our Enemy, than of our Friend. We rely upon the Lenity and Goodneſs of this, but we fear the Malice of the other. Thy Enemy therefore prevents the Commiſſion of thoſe Errors which a Confidence in the Kindneſs of thy Friend oft betrays thee into. So thou haſt the good Effect, which tho' it proceeds not from Charity, is a real Benefit to thee. 2. It was wiſely ſaid by an ancient *Heathen*, That he who will make any conſiderable Progreſs in Vertue, it is neceſſary that he have either a wiſe, faithful Friend, or a very ſevere Enemy. Many are the Faults in Life, which tho' forgotten, yet ought to be remembered. It is likely we have neither given to God nor our Neighbour that Satisfaction which the Offence requires: It is then neceſſary that Sins unrepented of be brought into our Memories, and ſet before us. We are too tender of our ſelves; we rather ſtudy to forget even greater Sins, or extenuate them, and wholly neglect the leſſer; wherein our *Self-love* ever deceives us, eſteeming

eſteeming great Sins little, and little ones none at all. Serm. 5.

The Reading of Books, tho' of true Piety, do ſeldom much affect us, or the Impreſſion laſts not long, both becauſe we bring not good, well-prepared Minds to them; and the Rules of Life therein laid down, tho' never ſo ſtrict and particular, are favourably applied by us, when we make our ſelves the *Expoſitors*.

Thy Friend, tho' he loves thee never ſo well, it may be he hath not all the Degrees of Wiſdom requiſite to a juſt Admonition or Reproof, or he is afraid to diſturb the Eaſe thou ſeemeſt to enjoy. But thine *Enemy* will not ſpare thee: He watches with Diligence and Spight for thy Failings, writes them down in his Book, ready to be produced when he thinks he can do the greateſt Miſchief. Happy were we, if we would recollect the Sins of our Lives half the times he doth. His Tongue, like a *Razor*, will launce and cut, bring to thy Memory, and diſcover thoſe palliated Corruptions which elſe would have infected the Soul with Diſeaſes incurable. If he had not upbraided thee with ſuch or ſuch a Fault, poſſibly thou

hadſt

Serm. 5. hadſt never thought of it, but died in the Sin without Repentance. Therefore as *David* did not puniſh the Curſings of *Shimei*, but referred the Reproaches to the Judgment of God; ſo ought a good Chriſtian to make the beſt Advantages from the Malice of wicked Men, to bleſs God, and love his Enemies.

Laſtly, Let us all conſider, That Chriſt hath made our Forgiveneſs of other Mens Treſpaſſes againſt us, the Condition upon which God will forgive our Treſpaſſes againſt him: And every time we ſay that Prayer he hath taught us, we conſent and beg God's Pardon on the ſame *Terms* we pardon others: And it is a certain Sign that he really expects our Obedience, ſince he condeſcends to make ſuch a Condition, when, betwixt both the Parties offended and the Offences, the Diſproportion is ſo infinite. It is great Impudence to expect that Favour and Mercy from him which we beg with Hearts full of Malice and Revenge towards our Neighbour: More eſpecially when we come (as at this time) to pray for the moſt Spiritual Bleſſings to be received by us

in

in the Holy Communion, the greateſt Mercies to be beſtowed upon the greateſt Sinners. With what Calmneſs, how filled with Peace and Love ſhould thoſe Souls be, who approach that Altar which repreſents Love it ſelf crucified? and is a Commemoration of him, who in this ſhewed the Greatneſs of his Love, *That when we were Enemies he died for us?*

The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, &c.

The End of the Fifth Sermon.

Serm. 5.

hadſt never thought of it, but died in the Sin without Repentance. Therefore as *David* did not puniſh the Curſings of *Shimei*, but referred the Reproaches to the Judgment of God; ſo ought a good Chriſtian to make the beſt Advantages from the Malice of wicked Men, to bleſs God, and love his Enemies.

Laſtly, Let us all conſider, That Chriſt hath made our Forgiveneſs of other Mens Treſpaſſes againſt us, the Condition upon which God will forgive our Treſpaſſes againſt him: And every time we ſay that Prayer he hath taught us, we conſent and beg God's Pardon on the ſame *Terms* we pardon others: And it is a certain Sign that he really expects our Obedience, ſince he condeſcends to make ſuch a Condition, when, betwixt both the Parties offended and the Offences, the Diſproportion is ſo infinite. It is great Impudence to expect that Favour and Mercy from him which we beg with Hearts full of Malice and Revenge towards our Neighbour: More eſpecially when we come (as at this time) to pray for the moſt Spiritual Bleſſings to be received by us

in

in the Holy Communion, the greateſt Mercies to be beſtowed upon the greateſt Sinners. With what Calmneſs, how filled with Peace and Love ſhould thoſe Souls be, who approach that Altar which repreſents Love it ſelf crucified? and is a Commemoration of him, who in this ſhewed the Greatneſs of his Love, *That when we were Enemies he died for us?*

The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,&c.

The End of the Fifth Sermon.

SERMON VI.

St. Matthew V. 48.

Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.

AMongſt the many and great Difficulties which attended the firſt Entertainment of Chriſt's Religion, and might have been a total Diſcouragement, one was, That the Converts were obliged immediately to put in Practice the Doctrines which they were taught. In all the *Schools* of any Science, there is a reaſonable Computation of Time allowed, in which, by ſeveral Degrees of Attainment, the Student may be ſuppoſed to arrive at a good Underſtanding of that Science. But in the Philoſophy of our *Saviour*, the Precepts were new, contradictory to the Principles of their Education, deſtructive of the received Religion of their Country, and Worldly

Serm. 6.

ly Intereſt; grievous to Nature: So difficult, that in moſt Men of our Times a whole Life makes but a ſmall Progreſs in *Chriſtian* Vertue: Yet was there no Conſideration of Time proportionable to ſo great an Undertaking.

The New *Creation* was to be begun and finiſhed as the Old was, as it were in a Moment. The Doctrines of *Poverty of Spirit*, *Purity of Heart*, to be Perſecuted in Patience for Righteouſneſs, forgiving of Injuries, loving our Enemies, Mortification of Paſſions, with all other Inſtances of taking up the *Croſs of Chriſt* comprehended in this Heavenly Sermon, were inſtantly to be learned. The Condition of the Times, by the Malice of their Enemies, and that Oppoſition they muſt expect from the whole World, gave them no Leiſure for the gradual Attainment of all theſe extraordinary Improvements of their Minds.

They muſt even now put on the *whole Armour of God*, and begin the Warfare, *reſiſting unto Blood*. How was it then? was there not here a *Fiat Lux* as in the beginning? *God ſaid, Let there be Light, and there was Light.* The ſame Word which gave the Command, did

did infuſe Strength, Comfort and Direction to the Performance of it. Which Acknowledgment of *Divine Grace*, with the right underſtanding the Nature of *Goſpel Perfection*, is the only ſure Ground that a good Chriſtian can have in his Endeavours after Holineſs; the only Foundation of Comfort in the Expectation of Succeſs to thoſe Endeavours. Certainly God commands no Impoſſibilities. It can never conſiſt with the Juſtice, Goodneſs or Wiſdom of our moſt gracious Lawgiver, to oblige us, under the Penalty of eternal Miſery, to the Performance of thoſe things which he before knew would far exceed our Powers. This would be to tyrannize over the Weakneſs of his Creatures; to lay an immoveable *ſtumbling Block* in the way of their Obedience, from whence there could redound neither Benefit to them, nor Glory to himſelf.

Since therefore our Saviour hath in the Text commanded every one, who profeſſeth himſelf a Chriſtian, to be *perfect*, we ought to believe that he may be ſo in the Senſe our Saviour did intend. So that from theſe Words I will enquire,

I. What

Serm. 6.

I. What is that *Perfection* which Chriſtians are obliged to?

II. What may be thoſe Reaſons why the Chriſtian Religion doth oblige its Followers to greater Degrees of Holineſs than any other Diſpenſation?

I. What is that *Perfection* which Chriſtians are obliged to? If we conſider this Command, *Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect*, with reſpect only to the Duty of doing Good to All, which is our Saviour's Diſcourſe immediately before, we are commanded to imitate God in two things, which make up his Perfection in this Particular:

1. In a free and generous Liberality, which is not produced, guided or terminated in Deſigns of any particular Intereſt or Advantage.

2. In a tranſcendent Goodneſs, which will not ſuffer it ſelf to be overcome by the Malice or Ingratitude of Men, but *loves Enemies*, *bleſſeth* them who *Curſe*, *doth good to them that hate it*, and *prays for them that deſpightfully uſe it.*

If we extend the Obligation to Perfection to all Chriſtian Duties; then is it

it neceſſary, that the Senſe and Meaning of it be ſtated and limited by that Law which lays that Obligation. Serm. 6.

The original Law of Paradiſe did oblige *Adam* to pure *Innocence*, *perfect Obedience*, not ſpotted with the leaſt *Sin*. And the extraordinary Circumſtances in his Creation, and the Command given by God himſelf, make it not unreaſonable. But, that the Chriſtian Law doth not expect the ſame Exactneſs, is clear from all thoſe Proviſions it hath made for the Salvation of Sinners. So gracious is this Covenant, that the Conſtitution of it ſuppoſeth Men may fall into Sin, and ordaineth true *Repentance* to make Satisfaction for the Failures in our Lives. Moreover, our Saviour (St. *Luke* 15. 7.) ſeems to advance Repentance above a State of Impeccability. ' *There ſhall be Joy in Heaven over one Sinner that repenteth, more than over many juſt Perſons, who need no Repentance.*

We do not forfeit our Right to the Bleſſings of this Covenant by every *Sin* we do commit, nor by any Sin which we forſake by timely *Repentance*. So that at the Great Day of Judgment it will be all one, not to have ſinned, or

truly to have repented. This is the
Serm. 6. whole Tenor of the Goſpel, which is therefore juſtly called *Glad Tidings*; which upon other Terms it would not be. The firm Belief of this, is abſolutely neceſſary to the Encouragement and Comfort of every good Chriſtian here, and to their Happineſs hereafter.

And upon theſe Terms, whoever dieth in the Favour of God, hath fulfilled the Law, and ſhall obtain the Promiſe of eternal Life, having performed the Condition which was required.

It hath indeed been diſputed, whether it be poſſible for the *Regenerate*, aſſiſted by the ordinary Grace of the Goſpel, to live without Sin? to which the *Catholick Church* hath not given a full Reſolution, ſuppoſing the Faith well ſecured, when it was reſolved againſt *Pelagius*, That Chriſt's Law is not to be fulfilled without the Grace of Chriſt.

St. *Auſtin* was tender of denying, That a Chriſtian may live without Sin by *Grace*; yet could he have no good Opinion of him, who ſhould think himſelf the Perſon who lives without Sin.

Sin. It is a wiſe and true Determination of the *Council of Orange*, That a Christian may, by the Divine Aſſiſtance and his own faithful Endeavours, perform all things neceſſary to his Salvation. To live without any Sin, is not neceſſary, becauſe neither poſſible to our Nature, nor any Condition of our *Covenant.* He is the beſt Man who commits the feweſt Errors and doth moſt Good. Yet is it the whole Deſign of the *Chriſtian Law* to raiſe its Profeſſors to the higheſt Degrees of Holineſs that Human Nature is capable of. That is *perfect* (ſaid *Ariſtotle*) *where nothing proper to its Nature is wanting:* Which Definition is agreeable to the Scripture Senſe, not excluding all *Sin. Job* is ſaid to be a *perfect Man*, and *David*, *a Man after God's own Heart*, who ſhould fulfil all his Will. Man is made a fallible Creature: If he were *infallible*, either in Knowledge or Practice, he would be ſome other Creature, not Man. Serm. 6.

What do they do leſs than arraign the Author of Nature, who by their perpetual Complaints of the Condition of Man in this World, have repreſented him as the moſt defective Part of the

Creation? created ſick, commanded to
Serm. 6. be well; with Inclinations which we muſt never gratify, Paſſions we muſt never uſe, and a Happineſs propoſed we can never attain, becauſe the Conditions are impracticable.

Theſe Diſputants ſeem to argue thus weakly, on purpoſe to repreſent Reaſon in Man as uſeleſs and pernicious, the Cauſe of all the Errors in Life; and to juſtify the Declamations they have made againſt it. But,

1. Since the Wiſe Creator thought fit there ſhould be ſuch a Being as Man, compounded of Body and Spirit; and that he ſhould be placed in this part of the Univerſe, we call Earth; that Body muſt neceſſarily be endowed with ſuch Qualities as will ariſe from the Nature of that Earth whereof it is made, and which it doth inhabit. Every Planet will differ from another in the Qualities of Heat and Cold, Rarity and Denſity, Gravity and Levity, according to their Diſtances from the Sun; and whatever Bodies are in them, will, by the Law of Nature, undergo the ſame proportionate Alterations. It is therefore very Unphiloſophical to caſt ſo many

many contumelious and unworthy Reproaches upon God, in that he hath put Souls into ſuch Bodies; ſince, without a perpetuated Miracle, they can be no other than they be. Would they have Bodies in which are no Motions? or would they have ſuch Motions as ſhall make no Impreſſions upon the Soul? that is, ſuch a Compoſition whoſe conſtituent Parts ſhould have nothing to do the one with the other. Serm. 6.

2. If we well conſider, we ſhall conclude, that the Bodies we have are excellently fitted to all thoſe wiſe Purpoſes, for which God hath placed us in this State upon Earth.

It hath pleaſed *Providence* to place Mankind here in an imperfect State, that ſo we might in a way congruous to free and rational Agents, fit and prepare our ſelves for, and at length obtain the greateſt Perfection our Souls are capable of. This Life is a State of Probation, a School of Vertue; there muſt be Difficulties and Conflicts, to try and improve the Mind by continued Exerciſe of its Strength, Courage and Magnanimity, wherein its true *Worth* doth conſiſt: That it ſcorns to be brought into

Serm. 6. Slavery, under the Dominion of any Paſſion; but will reſolutely aſſert its Authority, check and controul all rebellious Aſſaults of unreaſonable Propenſions. It was neceſſary, that the Nature of our Bodies ſhould be ſuch as might receive Impreſſions from without, and convey them to the Soul, that ſhe might uſe her Reaſon and her Liberty, either to entertain them, or reject them.

If our Bodies were much of a different Nature from what they are, many Vertues would not be at all; as Temperance, Sobriety, Patience, Fortitude; theſe conſiſting in that *Right of Dominion*, the Soul ought to exerciſe over the Body.

Paſſions have been of great Uſe to the Benefit of Mankind, and have produced ſuch noble Effects, that they may juſtly be eſteemed Enemies to Vertue and the World, who endeavour totally to extirpate them. There is Reaſon to doubt whether the Severity of *Cato*, or the mild Wiſdom of *Lælius*, was moſt profitable to the Common-wealth. St. *Auſtin*'s civil and gentle Temper, and St. *Hierom*'s rough Auſterity, were of equal Advantage to the *Church of Chriſt*; both of them, by almoſt contrary Vertues,

tues, were acceptable unto God. *Eraſmus*, ſpeaking of the great Diſſention betwixt *Chryſoſtom* and *Epiphanius*, hath a remarkable Saying, That God doth ſometimes permit ſuch *Human Affections* in his Saints, *Nè pro Diis habeantur*; leaſt they ſhould be eſteemed Gods. Certain it is, There have been thoſe whoſe illuſtrious Vertues and great Benefactions to Mankind have juſtly gained the Reputation of ſo Divine a Temper; the Brightneſs whereof ſuffered but little Diminution by being ſhaded with ſome Humanities. Serm. 6.

3. Man is endowed with ſuch Powers as are ſufficient to the Acquiſition of Vertue and Happineſs, with Underſtanding to diſtinguiſh Good from Evil, and Liberty of Choice, wherein conſiſts the Foundation of all Morality; without which all Actions would be either *caſual* or *fatal*, from Chance or Neceſſity.

There is moreover implanted in the Soul ſo ſtrong Deſires of, and Tendencies to Good and Happineſs, which, like a natural Gravitation towards its Center, is a great Addition to that Force of Reaſon, which, in the Determinati-

on of our Actions, we ought to follow.
Serm. 6. Evil indeed doth too often appear in the Habit of Good, and cheats our Senſes with falſe Repreſentations. Reaſon therefore muſt always be upon its Guard, never haſtily give Entertainment to a ſtrange Object; but with *Homer*'s *wary Hoſt*, ſtand and enquire, Τὶς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν; ποθί ſοι πόλις, ἠδὲ ſοκῆες; What Opinion is this? where was it bred? at *Rome* or *Geneva*? who were its Parents? Ambition, Pride, Revenge or Diſcontent? Such prudent Behaviour will be a good Preſervative againſt Error in Belief or Practice, and is ever in our Power, no very difficult Exerciſe of Reaſon.

4. If we conſider, that as Vertue is founded on Oppoſition and Difficulties, ſo in caſe our Endeavours do not always ſucceed, but we fall, and are overcome, God hath promiſed to accept of our true Repentance.

This will ſilence all thoſe Complaints of the Miſeries of Human Life, in order to the Attainment of Happineſs, whereby ſome unfortunate, melancholick or ſloathful Perſons have miſrepreſented thoſe very things which give the occaſions

ſions of Vertue: As if Nature were not a tender Parent to Man, but an unjuſt Stepmother; our Bodies not fit Inſtruments of the Soul, but its Priſon, falſly ſuppoſing it thrown down into it from a more happy State. Theſe Accuſers of Providence have never well pondered the whole Syſtem of the Univerſe, are unſettled in the Nature of Vertue, and Scepticks in all Matters of *Revelation.* Serm. 6.

Wiſely did the *ancient Jews*, in the number of thoſe things they ſay were made before the World, put *Repentance.* God ordered the Remedy, foreſeeing the Diſeaſe. And indeed God's accepting of Repentance, ſeems to be of *eternal Reaſon*, becauſe it is all that it is poſſible for a Sinner to do, and reſtores that *Divine Image* which his Sins had defaced, ſo cannot but be acceptable to God.

This was the Belief of the wiſeſt Heathens, as is clear, particularly from that moſt ancient Syſtem of Morality in *Cebe*'s *Table*, wherein *Repentance* is introduced as neceſſary, before you can arrive at the Habitation of perfect Happineſs: But Revelation hath given us full Aſſurance.

Nor

Serm. 6. Nor doth this Senſe of *Perfection* diſcourage the moſt ambitious Endeavours, ſince every Man is bound to be as good as he can; every one can do as much as he can, and it is but reaſonable, that we ſhould be obliged to do to the utmoſt of our Power. We are too apt to flatter and deceive our ſelves, to bring down the Intent of the Chriſtian Rule to our own ſluggiſh Humors, and the Gratification of our own ſenſual Deſires. *Exiguum quiddam eſt ad Legem bonum eſſe:* It is no very difficult thing to be good, according to the Civil Laws of Men. We ordinarily account him *temperate* enough, who doth but juſt keep his Brain from Sottiſhneſs, and his Body from Diſeaſes; him a *Religious good Man*, whoſe outward Conduct makes him not ſuſpected of groſſer Enormities. But the loving Kindneſs of God teaches to *deny all Ungodlineſs and Worldly Luſts*; to bring all our Paſſions and Carnal Deſires under the Command of Reaſon and Religion. It makes the Extravagancies of our Thoughts, conſented to, real Sins. So that the Chriſtian ſtands obliged to greater Purity than ever any Maſter of Morals taught his Schollars; to a more exact Holineſs than

than ever the World knew: Which will appear highly reaſonable, if we Serm. 6. conſider theſe things:

1. That this is the laſt *Revelation* which God will make to the World.

After Man had fallen from that Righteouſneſs wherein God had Created him, his Reſtauration could not be perfected in a Moment, nor could he be raiſed to thoſe Degrees of *Divinity* he had loſt, but by ſeveral diſtinct Steps and Advances. He was become ſo ſubject to the Power of Sin, that it ſeemed to the Divine Wiſdom proper, by little and little, to enſtate him in his forfeited Happineſs. Immediately after the Commiſſion of that Sin which involved whole Mankind in Miſery, God was pleaſed to give the Promiſe of the *Meſſias*, in whom all Men ſhould be made alive, (*Gen.* 3. 15.) but the Impletion of that Promiſe was at a great Diſtance of Time, and in dark, obſcure Terms. So God permitted the World to ſeek after Happineſs in the Dimneſs of natural Light, wherein it is no wonder if many of them miſſed the right way; even thoſe of them who are moſt renowned for their Attainments in Vertue, made thoſe

Serm. 6. thoſe Breaches upon true Reaſon, which the Doctrine of our Saviour will not allow. *Two thouſand* Years after, God raiſed Mankind ſomething higher; and by a Revelation given to *Moſes*, on purpoſe to preſerve the Belief of the only true God, preſcribed exactly the Manner wherein he would be Worſhipped. And this was a conſiderable Approach unto the laſt and moſt perfect Diſpenſation which God intended; the whole Ceremonial part of that Law, the *Sacrifices* and *Purifications*, being but Shadows of him, whoſe Doctrine, if entertained, would effectually purify the Soul, who offered himſelf a *Sacrifice* for the Sins of the whole World. *The Law was a School-maſter to bring us to Chriſt*, Gal. 3. 24.

It was but a low and obſcure Revelation, added very little to the perfecting of their Natures, conſiſting in the Obſervation of external *Rites*, which the Apoſtle ſaith, *could not purify the Soul, or cleanſe the Conſcience.* Therefore two thouſand Years after the giving that Law, God, in the latter Days, was pleaſed *to ſpeak unto us by his Son*, (Heb. 1.) and this is the higheſt Manifeſtation the World is to expect, tho' an Angel

gel from Heaven ſhould be the Preacher of another. Serm. 6.

This far tranſcends the Holineſs which Mankind was before acquainted with. Here God hath fully repaired the Loſs in *Adam*, and reſtored to us the bleſſed Advantages in him forfeited: For as he loſt the *Image of God*, we, by living up to the Commands of our Religion, are inveſted with it again, and made Partakers of the Divine Nature.

Now, it ſeems highly reaſonable, that theſe being the laſt Times, after the Completion and End of which there will be no other *State* but that of Heaven it ſelf, they ſhould be moſt glorious in Sanctity and *Perfection* of all Chriſtian Vertues: That we ſhould be fully fitted for that place before we be admitted into it. There are indeed great Expectations of a far more happy State to the *Church* and the whole World, than yet it hath enjoyed, by the Exaltation of true Holineſs in its Friends, and the Converſion or Subduing of all its Enemies. Theſe are noble Deſires, and worthy of a Chriſtian: But as to thoſe who have not yet attained to that Aſſurance, which Pious and Learned Men declare they have, that

Serm. 6. that ſuch a happy State ſhall ſhortly be introduced by an extraordinary Providence; they ceaſe not the leſs to pray, Even ſo, *come Lord Jeſus*; believing, that if the *Milennium* be yet to come, it is in the Power of all Men to begin it when they will, by the unfeigned Practice of thoſe Chriſtian Vertues which ſhall make up the Happineſs of that Time.

In the *Primitive Chriſtianity*, there are many great and wonderful Inſtances of that Divinity of Life, which the Doctrine of Chriſt teacheth its Profeſſors to aſpire after. *Juſtin Martyr* tells us, *That to be perfect, and to be a Chriſtian, was all one.* We pray daily, That Chriſt's Kingdom may come; That the Goſpel-Righteouſneſs may ſpread it ſelf over the whole Earth; That all Sin and Wickedneſs may be rooted out, and every one *that names the Name of Chriſt, may depart from all Iniquity.*

II. It will appear reaſonable, that Chriſtians ſhould be obliged to the higheſt Degrees of Sanctity, if we conſider the Helps and Advantages their Religion doth allow them.

Chriſti-

Chriſtianity is a *Yoak* and a *Burden*, (as our Saviour calls it, *Mat.* 11. 29.) becauſe it puts us upon the hard Duties of Self-denial, fighting againſt, and conquering our own deareſt Selves, our moſt beloved Appetites: Yet is this *Yoak eaſy, and this Burden light.* We are not only, not bound to Impoſſibilities; but we have vaſt Encouragements, more than ſufficient to ſweeten the greateſt Difficulties in a Courſe of Piety. The firſt of theſe Helps is, Serm. 6.

1. The Example of our *Saviour.* The Perfection of whoſe Life, fully imprinted on our Souls, will be a ſure Antidote and Remedy againſt the Infection of vicious Examples, wherewith the World abounds. If Mankind hath received any Benefit, to the Amendment of its Morals, from *Philoſophy*, it hath proceeded rather from the wiſe and good Sayings which the Profeſſors of it have left behind them, than from the Exactneſs of their *Lives* to what they taught. But every *Action* of our Saviour, whilſt he was with Men, ſhewed abundantly, that his Doctrines were all practicable. Then it was, and it was the only time ſince the World had

a Beginning, that according to the Sup-
Serm. 6. poſition of *Plato* in *Tullie*, *If Vertue could be beheld with Human Eyes, it would raiſe a wonderful Love unto it.* It is extraordinary Vertues cauſed the Admiration, and drew the Love of all Men, who had any Senſe of Truth or Goodneſs.

To ſee Divinity it ſelf embodied, to live in a conſtant Converſe with pure Goodneſs, to hear his infallible Dictates, to have eaſy Recourſe to his wiſe Advice, to partake of Tokens of his Love, to be a daily Auditor of Heavenly Diſcourſes, Divine Myſteries, and Secrets of Eternity: To be his Companion and his Friend, to eat and drink at his Table, to obſerve the Greatneſs of his Charity, the Wiſdom of all his Actions, the Power of his Inſtructions, the Zeal of his Exhortations, and Mildneſs of his Reproofs, the Care of Men's Bodies, and true Love to their Souls; with what Induſtry and indefatigable Pains he proſecuted the Work his Father ſent him into the World to do: To have ſeen, I ſay, all theſe, and infinite more, the true Efforts of an incomparable Vertue, is ſo moving, and muſt needs make

ſuch

ſuch Impreſſions as it were impoſſible could either be reſiſted or razed out. Serm. 6.

But we muſt not envy the Felicity of thoſe Days: Chriſt himſelf hath told us, (St. *John* 20. 29.) *Bleſſed are they who have not ſeen, yet have believed. We have a ſure Word of Propheſy, to which we ſhall do well, if we take heed.* The Picture of our moſt Divine Saviour, drawn with Care and Honeſty by the Pencils of thoſe whom himſelf had taught; far excelling the *Jupiter Olympius* or *Minerva Athenienſis*, the admired Works of *Phidias*, who yet is ſaid to have been more happy in making the *Effigies of Gods, than of Men.*

Here is conſummate Goodneſs in all its Heavenly, Natural Beauties, free from thoſe adventitious Paintings, whereby the fooliſh Wiſdom of after Ages thought to have adorned it, but have deformed it. Here is a Vertue, not ſtupid, dull, or ſluggiſh, not artificial, not moved by *hypocritical Mechaniſm:* But read, and ſee how it lives and acts. In *Humility*, its Motions are modeſt, mild and eaſy; it ſeems to hide and conceal its Excellencies; yet are they thereby more conſpicuous, and to be admired.

Serm. 6. In its *Charity* and Zeal to Goodneſs, the Energies are more vigorous and apparent, never to be diſcouraged. *Patience* here is not a Stoical Inſenſibility, nor Self-reſignation a Conſequence from *Fatality*; but both ariſe from a firm Belief in a good and wiſe Governor of the World: For why ſhould a Man contend with God? So great are all the Graces in our Saviour's Life, that they alone are able to give a Teſtimony, That he came from Heaven, tho' he had not done *Miracles*.

To this infallible Rule we may ſecurely reſort in all the difficult Circumſtances of Human Actions. From hence we may receive the full Reſolution of all our Doubts and Scruples. This is a ſure Guide of Conſcience in all doubtful Caſes to enquire, what did the *Holy Jeſus?* whoſoever follows him ſhall not *walk in Darkneſs*. We need not now, with much Trouble and little Satisfaction, read over the voluminous Writings of Men, who (if their Intereſt and Deſign be not to lead us into Errors, yet) certainly confound the Underſtanding, and ſend away the Mind, deſirous of Information more perplexed.

The

The Author of the Precepts and Directions here given, was one of infinite Knowledge, who foreſaw all the Diſeaſes that might afflict the Soul; ſo able to preſcribe the moſt ſoveraign Remedies: One of infinite Love, and moſt tender Compaſſions, who will apply no Medicines more pungent and grievous than the Nature of the Diſtemper ſhall require, in order to a perfect Cure. Come hither therefore, all wounded, broken, *contrite Hearts*: Tell him of all your Sickneſſes, enumerate your Sorrows, lay open the moſt inveterate Sores, be not afraid to diſcover thoſe inviſible Plagues which already have near Mortally infected your Souls, and if longer concealed, will be incurable. He will not break the bruiſed Reed, nor quench the ſmoaking Flax: He healeth the broken in Heart, and bindeth up their Wounds, powering in the (μαλάγματα) ſofter Medicines of Wine and Oil. This Heavenly Phyſician will rectify and convince your Underſtandings in the Nature and Danger of your Condition. Serm. 6.

1. He will ſhew you, That the Diſeaſe hath ſeized your moſt noble Part;

it is the *Soul* that is ſick; and that all
Serm. 6. Diſeaſes of the Soul are more dangerous than thoſe of the Body; that in this Men are miſerably miſtaken. If the Body be out of order, we go preſently to our Bed, ſend for the *Phyſician*, ſtretch out our Arms to his Launce, yield any Part of our Body to his painful Scarifications, and greedily drink down moſt nauſeating Potions: But how unconcerned are we when *Sin* hath broken in upon the Soul! invaded its (εὐεξία) healthful Conſtitution! we ſhun the Philoſopher who ſhould cure us, reject his Advice, hate the Phyſick which would recover us. If the Wounds (vicious Commiſſions have made in the Conſcience) at any time begin to pain us, we ſeek for Eaſe from the vain and noxious Diverſions of unlawful Pleaſures, not from the wholſome Directions of a Chriſtian Piety: We apply our ſelves to *Bacchus*, or other jolly Heathen Deities, rather than to the *God of all Conſolation*. Who is he who thinks not himſelf more miſerable under a Fit of the Gout, than in a Habit of Covetouſneſs? who eſteems not a beauteous Body a greater Happineſs than a Mind adorned with all Vertues? yet is there

there any Dropſy, any Fever which torments the Body ſo much as Anger, Envy, or Revenge do the Soul? Serm. 6.

2. Diſeaſes of the Mind take away all Senſe of the Badneſs of its Condition. It is the Art of a Phyſician firſt to take care to prevent Sickneſs; ſecondly, that if Men be ſick, they feel they are ſo. There is a Phrenſy in all Sin. In the Body, no Man calls a Fever by the Name of Health, a *Conſumption* a firm Conſtitution, or the Gout by the contrary Name of Swiftneſs. Yet in the Mind we call Covetouſneſs *wiſe Providence*, Pride, Magnanimity; raſh Paſſion, Fortitude; we are inſenſible of, or love the Diſeaſes we are ſick of, ſo leſs capable of a Cure.

3. In the Body, tho' one Part be ſick, or in Pain, yet all the reſt remain not much affected, and can perform their Functions: But every Sin vitiates the whole Soul; like a Gangrene, it ſpreads its deadly Poiſon into every Power and Faculty. The Underſtanding is depraved with falſe Notions of things, the Will blindly follows miſtaken Apprehenſions, Reſolution is weak and wa-

vering; no Appetite, no Reliſh of Ex-
Serm. 6. erciſes of Piety, no Heart to Goodneſs. So juſtly is it given to the Memory of *Ariſto Chius*, that he was the firſt who called *Vertue* ὑγίεια, the Sanity of the Mind; and all Philoſophy, Jewiſh, Heathen, and Chriſtian, hath eſteemed and called Sinners, *Dead* Perſons.

4. *Laſtly*, The Body which is afflicted with one Diſeaſe, is often free from all others: But there is no Diſeaſe which aſſaults the Soul ſingle, it comes accompanied with a numerous Train of Vices; and when the firſt finds Entrance, the reſt will crowd in, and if not quite overwhelm her, yet are they not to be beaten back, without a long and very ſevere Conflict.

Theſe things being thus, to whom ſhall we go but to that Saviour of Souls, who only hath the Words of *eternal Life*.

2. The ſecond Help is, The Aſſiſtance of the *Holy Spirit*, which is always preſent to ſincere Endeavours; to comfort us in Diſtreſſes, to inform our Ignorances, to ſtrengthen our Weakneſs, and ſupport us under all

Difficulties.

Difficulties. This indeed we may reject, reſiſt and quench, and render all its merciful Intendments ineffectual; but then neither God nor his Religion are to be accuſed. Serm. 6.

3. The laſt great Help is, The Promiſe of *eternal Life*; betwixt which, and all we can do or ſuffer for Righteouſneſs ſake, there can be no Proportion.

The Word *Heaven* includes more Happineſs than Mortal Words can expreſs. But lift up thy Thoughts, and let thy Soul, in Holy Contemplation, aſcend above the Clouds and Sphere of this Earth, the higher thou getteſt, as all the Joys and Sorrows here below will become inviſible and vaniſh into nothing, ſo wilt thou feel greater Enlargements and anſwerable Satisfactions, which cannot be uttered.

3, It will appear very reaſonable, that Chriſtianity ſhould oblige us to higher Degrees of Sanctity, if we conſider the extraordinary way in which this Doctrine was made known unto the World.

Serm. 6. That God ſhould ſend his only Son, could not poſſibly be with any low Intent: That he ſhould lead a Life, and die a Death of ſuch Miſery and Contempt, could not be upon a little Deſign. It was certainly to bring more Holineſs than ever was before amongſt Men; to exalt the Reality of Religion above what the *Jewiſh* or any other Law had been able to do: For had other *Religions* been ſufficient for the attaining thoſe great Ends which God always intended; had they been capable of giving that Perfection to the Souls of Men, which is a neceſſary Preparation to future Glory; ſurely God, who ſo loved his only Son, would not have ſpent his precious Blood, or uſeleſsly ſhed it for thoſe Ends which might otherways have been attained. No, God intended *better things for us*; to bring us to a greater Likeneſs to himſelf, to invite us to a more exact Conformity to his Will, in order to our greater Happineſs; ſhewing us, by the wonderful Tranſactions of our Salvation, how ſincerely he loves Mankind, and is deſirous to advance its Felicity.

For the Chriſtian Religion is no *upſtart Hereſy* or ſeditious Faction; it took not

not its Original (as moſt Hereſies have) from the peeviſh or ambitious Spirit of an ill-natured Perſon; nor was it invented and entertained to ſerve the Ends and unjuſt Deſigns of ſome State-Polititian; it was not the Neceſſities of ſome declining Monarchy which gave it Birth, nor was it ever intended (however, it hath often been abuſed) to exalt the Ambitious and Proud; nor hath it been propagated by any irregular ways of War and Perſecution. It is as ancient as God himſelf, being the Tranſcript of that Law which is his eternal Nature. It ſprung to this height from the loweſt Humility and Obſcurity of Condition. It hath conquered all Oppoſitions by infinite Torments and Patience: By continual Death, it hath encreaſed its Life. Whilſt the Great Ones of the Earth ſtrove to extinguiſh this little Spark, they did but blow it up into a more illuſtrious Flame. Serm. 6.

Think therefore on the Life of *Jeſus*, and all the Circumſtances of his Humiliation, againſt what inſuperable Difficulties his Religion hath been carried on, and you will be conſtrained to conclude, that God deſigned ſomething more than ordinary, when, in his infinite

nite Wiſdom, he manifeſted it to the
Serm. 6. World.

That therefore we all may concur with God in a Deſign ſo noble, and ſo much to our Intereſt, we muſt free our Minds from all Prejudices and falſe Principles, from all drowſy Conceptions of the Nature of our Religion, which may hinder us in the Proſecution of our Duty.

1. Let us not think, that our Duty is impoſſible to be performed. God doth not tye thy Feet, and then command thee to run; not put out thine Eyes, and after puniſh thee for miſtaking the right way. No, he did, at the firſt making of his Laws, conſult thy Weakneſs, and doth always prevent thee with his *Grace*.

Doth God therefore command thee to repent? thou may'ſt repent, if thou ſeriouſly ſetteſt thy ſelf about it. It may be, by thy long and conſtant Perſeverance in Sin, thou haſt contracted ſo ſtrong Habits, that ſuch Degrees of Grace as were once ſufficient, are not now; and then the Work is, thro' thine own Fault, become more difficult; God not being bound to ſupply greater Meaſures

ſures of Aſſiſtances to thoſe who have miſ-ſpent ſo many, been ſo often Bank-rupt, and are become incurable. Serm. 6.

If God calls, there is a Poſſibility of going, unleſs he ſhould ſeem to ſport himſelf with that Miſery of his Creatures which he is the Author of; whereas God deals ſincerely with us. He hath no deceitful, *mental Reſervation*, no ſecret Will contrary to his revealed. Call to Mind thoſe ſerious Exhortations, paſſionate Entreaties, That the Sinner would turn and live; the many Expoſtulations, *Why will you die!* his pitying Exclamations, *O that thou hadſt known the things that belong unto thy Peace! O that my People were wiſe!* laſtly, the moſt ſolemn Proteſtations, *As I live* (ſaith the Lord) *I deſire not the Death of him that dies.* Thro' all which a ſober Mind cannot but ſee the greateſt Sincerity from God to us, and a plain Poſſibility in us to do what he requires, in order to our Happineſs. Say not therefore, *There is a Lion in the way*, That thou wouldſt reform thy ſinful Life, but that God will not help thee. *Epiſcopius* ſaid well, *The Doctrines of abſolute Decrees* and *Irreſiſtibility of Grace*, are two Prejudices neceſſary to be

Serm. 6. be removed before we can hope to make any Progreſs in *Speculative* or *Practical Theology*. And *Grotius* hath obſerved, That of the three Temptations wherewith the Devil aſſaulted our firſt Parents, and Chriſt himſelf, one is drawn from a Confidence in *Predeſtination*; which way of Diſputation from Fatality, was of Old juſtly called, ἀργὸς λόγος, by *Cicero*, *Iners & ignava ratio*, An idle and ſluggiſh Argument; ſuch being nothing but Excuſes proceeding from dull Minds, calling for a little more *Slumber*, till they ſleep the Sleep of Death.

They who ſo talk, have no Intention to reform themſelves; but are rather glad to catch at any Excuſe to their lazy Temper. Certainly he doth leſs Hurt who takes away our Life, than he who by Principles killing all Vertue, bereaves us of a *good Mind*: As a healthful Soul is more neceſſary to Happineſs than the moſt Athletick Conſtitution of the Body.

2. As we muſt not think, that God hath laid upon us more than we are able to bear; ſo we muſt not believe, that he hath commanded us more than we

we need perform: We muſt not fancy, that Chriſtianity gives more Liberty than indeed it doth; that the way to Heaven is not ſo *narrow* as is imagined. This is as dangerous a Rock as the former; and the way to Chriſtian Perfection is blockt up equally by them both. Serm. 6.

Whilſt thou fancieſt thy Obligations to Piety are leſs than they are, thou clearly betrayeſt, that thou art not ſerious in *Religion*, that thou doeſt not love Piety it ſelf, but wouldſt go to Heaven with as much Eaſe and as little Labour as is poſſible.

But ſurely the moſt Wiſe Lawgiver hath not given us an unneceſſary heap of Precepts, ſome of which he never intended we ſhould obſerve; nor hath he made a Mixture of Commands and Counſels dangerous for Man to make the Diviſion. God hath not done it; and if it be left to us, we love our ſelves ſo well, that (I fear) we ſhould make very few neceſſary *Commands*, but a great many *Counſels*, indifferent to be obſerved. *Julius Scaliger*'s Advice to his Son *Silvius*, concerning his Studies, will be very uſeful to a Chriſtian; Remember *Nihil unquam vulgare ullum pretium*

Serm. 6.

tium operæ feciſſe : No Good ever aroſe from vulgar and low Attempts. It is much the ſecureſt way to believe, that our Religion doth lay upon us the ſtricteſt Tyes of a Holy Life. If you think the Work more difficult, you will (if you be wiſe) begin ſooner, take more Pains, work more inceſſantly. St. *Paul* (*Phil.* 3. 12.) found himſelf much below Perfection, which made him ---- *reach forth to thoſe things that are before,* ---- *preſs towards the Mark.* There was never any Man, who, when he came to die, thought that he had taken too much Pains in the Practice of Holineſs. In all the Learned Languages the ſame Word ſignifies ſimply, *To do*, and to offer Sacrifice; (עשה, ῥέζω, *Facio*) intimating, that throughout our whole Life we do nothing, or nothing to much purpoſe, but when we are exerciſed in Religious Duties, ſerving God: *That* is truly to be *doing* ſomething of real Uſe and high Importance.

Let us then call our ſelves to account what Progreſs we have made towards this Perfection; how many Degrees we have attained.

The Mountain *Olympus* (by which the Poets have repreſented Heaven) was ſo

ſo called, becauſe, by its extraordinary Height, it did, ὀλλύειν τὰς πόδας, tire the Feet of them who did aſcend it. Many a weary Step muſt we take before we come to the top of that *Piſgah*, from whence we may view the Holy Land; we muſt make ſtrong Reſolutions never to be diverted by the greateſt Difficulties, or the moſt pleaſing Temptations. We muſt keep a conſtant Progreſs, having our Eyes fixed upon Heaven, looking to the *Cloud of Witneſſes* gone the ſame way before us, and to *Jeſus, the Author of our Faith, who is ſet down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God.* Theſe things, if we do, then, tho' the Journey be long and troubleſome, we ſhall aſſuredly, at length, come to the end of our Hopes, the Salvation of our Souls; and find, That Heaven is an exuberant Reward. *Amen.* Serm. 6.

The End of the Sixth Sermon.

SERMON VII.

St. John IV. 22.

Ye Worſhip ye know not what: We know what we Worſhip; for Salvation is of the Jews.

REligion is the univerſal Claim of Mankind, which all challenge as an Inheritance proper and due to reaſonable Minds: And thoſe various Shapes wherein it is made to appear in the World, are ſo far from being an Argument againſt the Truth of it, that they do ſtrongly demonſtrate it is a real thing, ſince the Efficacy of it is ſo great as to break through the thickeſt Clouds, diſcover it ſelf amidſt the groſſeſt Darkneſs, and the moſt rude Barbarity; neither the natural Ignorance of ſome, nor the acquired Wit of others, can altogether extinguiſh it; but it will ſhine with a

clearer or fainter Light, and make them
Serm. 7. happy who entertain it, as they muſt be miſerable who reject it.

And as the Diverſity of *Modes* in Religion ſhew its Reality, ſo the great *Conteſts* that are in the World about it, are a ſure Proof of its Worth and Excellency. That great Heat wherewith every one challengeth his own to be the *beſt*, tho' it prove not that, yet is it an evident Sign, that there is a true Value in the thing worthy of the Contention. And ſince we eſtimate the Richneſs of the Prize from the Preciouſneſs of thoſe things which are ventured in hopes to obtain it; wherewith ſhall we compare Religion, in Purſuit whereof Men willingly run the Hazard not only of their Eſtates and Lives, but too often even of their Souls? Surely, as *Solomon* ſaid of *Wiſdom*, *ſhe is more precious than Rubies; all the things thou canſt deſire, are not to be compared unto her.*

Great indeed are the Miſtakes which are daily made in this Particular, and of dangerous Conſequence, ſince the Cloud which moſt Men embrace doth not only darken the Heavenly Splendor of true Religion, but alſo fills the lower World with

with Storms and Tempeſts. Great is the Confidence wherewith every one reſts aſſured, that he hath found the direct way to Happineſs, and hath attained the top of that *Piſgah*, from whence, with Pride or Pity, he can look down upon other wandring miſtaken Mortals, and at the ſame time behold the *Promiſed Land*; which yet poſſibly he may never enter into: For Truth is a ſteady, eternal, immutable thing; the Opinions of Men alter not its Nature; how peremptory ſoever they may be, this cannot be changed: And Salvation will ever be attainable in thoſe Means which God hath appointed. The Natures of things are ſullen and inflexible, they keep the Courſe given them by their Creator, let the Fancies of Men be what they will. So that a Belief, tho' never ſo ſtrong, not grounded on true Reaſon, is but the Fancy of a diſtempered Brain, the waking Dreams of ſleepy Ignorance. Serm. 7.

For the *Samaritans* wanted nothing of Aſſurance, That theirs was the *true Church*, they had the Purity of Worſhip, and enjoyed the certain Means of Salvation, and conſequently, that the *Church* of the *Jews* was falſe, erroneous

and heretical, in the Communion of
Serm. 7. which no Salvation was to be expected; yet our Saviour tells them plainly, *Ye worſhip ye know not what; for Salvation is of the Jews.* Which Words are a Reſolution of Chriſt himſelf in the Controverſies betwixt two *great Churches*, both equally pretending to the Purity of Worſhip, and the trueſt Means of Salvation. In them we eaſily ſee theſe three things to be conſidered:

I. A Condemnation of the *Samaritan* Church. *Ye worſhip ye know not what.*

II. A Vindication of the *Jewiſh* Church. *We know what we worſhip.*

III. The Ground and Reaſon of this Judgment and Deciſion; *For Salvation is of the Jews.*

I. When our Saviour ſaith, *Ye worſhip ye know not what*, his Meaning is no leſs than, That the Manner of God's Worſhip eſtabliſhed, believed and practiſed by them, was without any Foundation in Truth, altogether irrational, no way to be defended. Which being the Determination of the only *infallible Judge*, it ſeems worthy of our Enquiry.

1. What

1. What thoſe Errors were in the Church of *Samaria*, which rendered their Worſhip ſuch as Salvation was not the promiſed Reward of. Serm. 7.

2. By what Arguments they defended thoſe Errors: For by ſatisfying theſe Enquiries, we may probably gain good Advantage to form a Judgment in Diſputes of a like Nature, which ſtill continue to diſturb the *Catholick Church.*

Their Errors were eſpecially theſe three:

I. A falſe Belief concerning the Object of their Worſhip.

II. Great Imperfection in their *Rule of Faith.*

III. The whole Fabrick of their Worſhip was founded in *Schiſm.*

I. As to the Object of their Worſhip, they practiſed ſuch Errors as were enough to ſpoil their whole Religion, amounting to no leſs than plain *Idolatry:* For whether *Idolatry* conſiſts in the Belief of more Gods than one, or in worſhiping the only true God under an *Image* in Contradiction to his Command, in both Senſes they were guilty

of this Sin. St. *Chryſoſtom* ſaith, Ἰουδαϊκὸν καὶ μικρὸν θεὸν ἐνόμιζον ὄντα, they thought the God of the *Jews* was not the God of any other Place. 2 *Kings* 17. 26. they call him, The God of the Land; as if his Power and Authority were confined in the ſame Limits as the Power of the King, and could lay no Claim to any Reverence or Service out of his own Dominion: That there was not one ſupream Creator and Governor of the World, but as many *Gods* as Kings of the Earth; and the Scripture ſaith expreſsly, (Verſ. 41.) *They ſerved their graven Images, as did their Fathers.* And it ſeems probable, that this Idolatry was continued down to the Days of our Saviour, who, when he had told the *Woman* of *Samaria*, ſhe *worſhipped ſhe knew not what*, adds preſently, *God is a Spirit*, St. *John* 4. 24. He ought not to be worſhipped under any Corporeal Figure, but in *Spirit and Truth*, according to his Nature. A Learned *Jew* tells us, *That the* Samaritans *worſhipped God in the Shape of a Dove*, being the Figure of thoſe Images we read *Jacob* hid under an *Oak in Sichem*, Gen. 35. 4. which Images they found, and worſhipped. The *Jews* did conſtantly lay

Serm. 7.

this

this Sin to their Charge; and ſtigmatized a *Samaritan* with the two firſt Letters of עבורה זרה *falſe Worſhip*, that all might know his Crime of *Idolatry*: accordingly they hated and curſed them, avoiding their Converſation, as of a Heathen or Publican. Serm. 7.

St. *Chryſoſtom* aſſures us, They did δαίμονας ἐν αὐλῷ θεὸν θεραπεύειν, τὰ ἀμικτα μίγνυντες, *they mixed the moſt inconſiſtent things together, the Worſhip of God and Dæmons.*

This therefore being the Error ſo poſitively cenſured by our Saviour, whatſoever *Society* of Men ſhall be found to practiſe the ſame Error in Worſhip, ought to believe themſelves deeply concerned in the Condemnation.

Polytheiſm, the Belief of many Gods, is ſo contradictory to the Notion of a God, and ſo deſtructive of all Religion, that the *Fathers* have made no Diſtinction betwixt this and *Atheiſm*, nor indeed is there any in the thing, ſince to entertain a falſe Notion of a God, is to believe none at all. *Quid enim intereſt utrum Deos neges an infames? There is little Difference whether we deny his Exiſtence, or by our unworthy Conceptions defame his Nature.* Hence it is recorded to the Memory of the Wiſdom

of an ancient Philoſopher, ὁ γὰρ ϑοι πεμ-
Serm. 7. πτὴν ἀρετὴν ὀνομάσας τὴν περὶ θεῶν δόξαν ἀληθῆ σαλύσιός ἐστι. Saluſtius *was the firſt who called a true Opinion of God, The fifth Cardinal Vertue.*

Now, there are two ſorts of Men who ſtand charged with this Idolatry; abſolute *Heathens*, and that Society which terms it ſelf *trueſt Chriſtian*, *Infidels*, and they who pretend to the only *Catholick Faith.* And it will be very difficult to find any Difference either in Belief or Practice, betwixt *Heathen* and *Chriſtian Rome* in this Particular. So that if one ſtands condemned, the other cannot be juſtified; both, or neither, will be Idolaters. Doth the Church of *Rome* profeſs Faith in one God? So did the Learned *Heathens* acknowledge one ſupream Being, with all the Excellencies included in his Nature: Yet St. *Paul* (Rom. 1. 21.) ſaith of them, *That when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but changed the Glory of the Incorruptible God into an Image made like to Corruptible Man*; which is too notorious in Popery to be denied.

In the Worſhip of their *Saints*, by Prayers and other Peculiarities of Adoration,

ration, nothing is more clear than that they worſhip *they know not what:* For if we look into their *Kalendar*, we ſhall find the Names of ſome who never were, of many who were in no reſpect good or vertuous, and ſome who having been canonized and adored for certain Years, upon ſome new Diſcovery of the Wickedneſs of their Lives, have been unſainted and condemned to the Fire. Such Images of Abomination placed in the Throne of God, made *Eraſmus* rather inclinable to ſay, *Saint* Socrates *pray for us*, judging a Moral Heathen a fitter Object of Devotion than the Saints of the *Pope*. As to the Worſhip given to Images, I reckon that not a new Idolatry, but a ſottiſh Supplement to the former. Thoſe Images may as ſoon hear and anſwer Prayers, as the Perſons to whom they are conſecrated. And through this multitude of Saints, (which the vulgar look upon as ſo many Deities) whatſoever the ſpeculative Church pretends, the People, who have not always preſent in their Minds the *Idea* of a moſt perfect Being, are in great Danger of believing more Gods, as the *Wits* are of believing none. In the Adoration of the *Hoſt*, the Papiſts confeſs

Serm. 7.

confeſs themſelves groſs *Idolaters*, if the
Serm. 7. Bread be not totally annihilated or changed into the Body of Chriſt; and if it be, farewell not only our *Reaſon*, but our *Senſes* too. There muſt be an univerſal *Metamorphoſis* of Mankind from rational and ſenſible into the moſt ſtupid Creatures. The Tranſmutation will be worſe than of *Ulyſſes* his Companions, tho' their external Shape was changed, νῦς ἦν ἔμπεδος, their Underſtanding remained with them.

So many Abſurdities and Contradictions are contained in Tranſubſtantiation, as never were in any Opinion in the World; and were it true, would render whole Chriſtianity ridiculous to a very mean Philoſopher. I will only add, That whereas there is ſcarce any Doctrine in Chriſtianity, of which there may not be produced ſome Reſemblance in the Religion of the Heathens; and Learned Men think they have found the *Article of the Trinity* (that Myſtery of the Goſpel moſt above our Reaſon) not only amongſt refined Philoſophers, but to be part of the Worſhip of leſs-conſidering Nations: Nothing like Tranſubſtantiation was ever found amongſt them; nor had it ever

ever been heard of amongſt Men, had not its Birth happened in ſuch an Age of Darkneſs, wherein Men acted neither by *Revelation* nor *natural Reaſon*. So that we may ſafely pronounce, *They worſhip they know not what*, beſtowing Divine Worſhip upon Objects, whoſe Natures are in no wiſe capable to receive it, and againſt the Command of the *only God*. Serm. 7.

II. The ſecond great Error in the *Church* of *Samaria*, was, The Imperfection of their Rule of Faith.

In all the Caſes of Human Life, if there be not an ὑποθέσις τῶν ὅλων, ſome fixed Principles, by which our Actions are to be directed, we ſhall certainly fluctuate, and wander as a Ship in the wide Sea without the Aſſiſtance of Stars or a *living Pilot*. And if the Rule of Guidance be either falſe, or not ſufficient, we certainly run almoſt an inevitable Hazard of *Shipwrack*, never to come to our deſired Haven. So is it in Spiritual Affairs. A true Belief and Practice, are neceſſary to Salvation; and it is not without dangerous Reflection upon the Wiſdom and Juſtice of God, that he, who made us on purpoſe to be eternally happy,

Serm. 7. happy, ſhould leave us without Means ſufficient to attain it. God hath given to all Men the Uſe of Reaſon; and to heal the Breaches which Paſſion and Worldly Intereſt have made upon that, he hath added the Revelation of his Will.

To the *Jews* this Revelation was ſo particular in all the parts of Worſhip, that there was little room left for the Exerciſe of Reaſon. When they thought to deck and adorn the Divine Precepts with Flowers of their own Inventions, they did indeed but deform the Heavenly Beauty, and obſcure its native Glory, as alſo torment and rack their own Imaginations; which I wiſh had not likewiſe happened to Chriſtian Theology.

But whilſt the *Jews* received the whole written Word of God as the *perfect Rule of their Faith*, the *Samaritans* acknowledged only the five *Books of Moſes*, rejecting the Writings of the Prophets and other Holy Inſpired Men. And this they did, not from a ſincere, religious Enquiry, but (as *Jeroboam*) upon Worldly Policy, to preſerve that Empire which they had unjuſtly acquired. In the Books of *Moſes*, there is nothing

nothing ſpecified of the Place wherein God would inhabit, of a City or *Temple* where he would fix his Reſidence. It would have been difficult from thoſe Writings to have confuted the Place of the *Samaritan* Worſhip; they wiſely diſallowed all thoſe parts of Scripture, wherein the full Hiſtory of God's chuſing *Jeruſalem*, *Mount Sion*, *and a Temple*, (*Σύνδεσμὸν λατρείας*, *the Bond of their Religion*) built by his own Command, to which all the *Tribes* were peremptorily enjoined to reſort, was contained. They (by an old *Index Expurgatorius*) blotted thoſe Books out of their *Canon*, which, if known and believed, would certainly undo their Worldly Greatneſs, deſtroy their Temple at *Gerizim*, and tranſlate the Worſhip of God to the *Mountain which he loved.* Serm. 7.

Moreover, in Confirmation of their *Schiſm*, they have corrupted even the Text of *Moſes*, *Deut.* 27. 4. inſtead of *Mount Hebal*, they have put *Mount Geraſim*; contrary to the Faith of all the ancient *Verſions and Paraphraſes* which ever were; as alſo have added thoſe Verſes with that impudent Alteration to the end of the Commandments, both in *Exod.* 20. 17. and *Deut.* 5. 21. So bad

Serm. 7. bad was their Cauſe, and ſo weak was their Defence, that when it was with all their Strength pleaded at the Tribunal of *Ptolomy*, (*Joſephus* 13. 6.) it was judged againſt them, they loſt their Cauſe, and their *Advocates their Lives.*

This great Imperfection in their *Rule of Faith* betrayed them to Perſeverance in a Religion contradictory to Divine Inſtitution, to which no Promiſe of Happineſs was annexed.

And ſurely this Charge is as ſtrong and true againſt the *Romaniſts*. Their Opinions are ſo irrational, that they are forced to forbid the Uſe of Reaſon in the Examination of them. Tho' to diſpute againſt *Reaſon*, is as ridiculous as if the Philoſopher ſhould have attempted to prove there was no Motion by *Walking*; by Reaſon to prove, there is none.

The new Opinion, That *Oral Tradition* is the ſureſt *Rule of Faith*, is ſo injurious to Scripture, and irrational in it ſelf, that it ſtands condemned by their own Church, *confuted* and ſilenced by ours. It will as well prove, That no Chriſtian did ever ſin, as that there never was any Failure in the Conveyance of Faith. Since the ſame Motives of

Hope

Hope and Fear ought to be as effectual to preſerve Men from ſinning, as from corrupting the received Doctrine. But that Opinion which is eſteemed Orthodox, That Scripture and Tradition make up the Rule of Faith, is no leſs derogatory to the Perfection and Sufficiency of God's Word. Serm. 7.

"The Decree of the Council of "*Trent* is, To receive and honour the "Books of Scripture, and alſo Traditi-"ons with equal pious Affection and "Reverence. What is this but to tye the Living to the Dead? as if the Authority of God ſtood in need of Human Aſſiſtance. *Bellarmin* calls Scripture a Rule, not entire, but partial. And what Degrees of Reſpect they allow the Scriptures when they contradict their *Traditions*, every one knows who looks into their Controverſies, unleſs it be a piece of Reſpect that they hide them from the People. Surely to put Scripture and Traditions in equal Commiſſion for the *Rule of Faith*, doth not ſtrengthen, but ſuppoſe a Weakneſs, not honour, but diſgrace it: Like joining *Saints* with Chriſt in the Office of Mediation, or mixing the Works of ſinful

ſinful Men with the Merits of the Im-
Serm. 7. maculate Saviour of the World.

Ego Legem profero, & tu Magiſtros citas? is an Interrogatory Saying of the *Jews*, whereby they intend, That the greateſt Human Authority is not to be brought in Competition with Divine.

This was the ſecond great Error of that Church, The Imperfection of their Rule of Faith.

III. The whole Fabrick of their Worſhip was founded in Schiſm. The Hiſtory is this:

That *Manaſſes* (whom *Nehemiah* had expelled out of the Church of *Jeruſalem*) by the Aſſiſtance of *Sanballat*, procured a Temple to be built upon Mount *Gerazim*, and himſelf to be High Prieſt of the new Religion. This was an open Defection from the Worſhip eſtabliſhed by God, and a reſolved *Schiſm*, whereby a Church was erected againſt a Church, the Fundamentals of Religion altered, *new Articles* of Faith impoſed, another way of Salvation propounded, in Oppoſition to the declared Will of God.

By what Methods and Degrees the *Biſhop of Rome* hath built his Church contra-

contradictory to the *primitive Pattern*, would be too long to tell; but that it is ſo, is demonſtrable. He hath built it upon other *Foundations* than were laid by the *Apoſtles*, it ſtands upon Doctrines which the Inſpired Writers never knew, but have antecedently confuted. He hath had his *Sanballats*, Kings and Princes, by whoſe Favour he hath eſtabliſhed his Throne in a pretended Dominion over the whole Earth. The Foundations of this *Papal Temple* (as of old *Rome*) have been laid in the Blood of Chriſtian Brethren, as the Deliverance we this Day commemorate abundantly teſtifies. *Popa* is the old *Latin* Word for him whoſe Office it was to *ſlay* the Sacrifices at the Heathen Altars. He whom we ſpeak of, is the univerſal *Victimarius*; Millions have fallen Sacrifices to his Unchriſtian Ambition. This part of the World hath been turned into a Field of Blood, and the *Weſtern* is rightly called *New*; he hath deſtroyed the Old, to enlarge his own Territories, not the Religion of Chriſt. The *Temple* he hath built is filled with ſo infinite a Number of *Images*, that it ſeems rather a *Pantheon of Heathens*, than a place of Chriſtians dedicated to the Worſhip of Serm. 7.

Serm. 7. the only true God. Every new Article which he obtrudes on the Faith of others, adds to the Guilt of *Schiſm*, and proves the Accuſation. This is that hath ever filled the World with Sects and Factions, when Men will not be ſatisfied with that way to Heaven which Chriſt hath opened.

Amongſt the *Jews*, ſo long as *Ribboth le Torah*, Supplements or Additions to the Law were not impoſed, but left indifferent; there were no Diviſions: But when thoſe Supererogations were made of equal neceſſary Obligation, then was Unity broken into numerous Factions. Opinions falſe or unneceſſary, yet tyrannically impoſed as parts of Chriſtian Faith, make up that Church which the *Pope* hath built upon *Mount Gerazim*: A Church cut off (as the Word ſignifies) from the truly Catholick.

In the *Jewiſh Kalender* there is a Faſt appointed in Memory of the Diſſention betwixt the Schools of two Great Rabbies, *Hillel* and *Sammai*, whoſe Diviſions were ſo great, that (they ſay) *Elias when he comes, will not be able to reconcile them.*

The Diviſions in Chriſtianity, tho (if Men were Wiſe and truly Good)

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do not judge them irreconcilable, yet every pious Mind cannot but think them much to be lamented. This was then their third great Error, their Worſhip was founded in *Schiſm*, was of their own making, not of God's, ſo there could be no Aſſurance of Salvation; which as God is the ſole Author of, ſo will he ever annex it a Reward of Obedience to his own Inſtitutions. The ſecond Enquiry is, Serm. 7.

II. By what Arguments they did defend theſe Errors. In this Diſcourſe of our Saviour with the *Woman of Samaria*, we find but one Argument urged for the Lawfulneſs of her Communion, (Verſ. 20.) *Our Fathers Worſhipped in this Mountain:* It is drawn from *Antiquity*, and hath great Force, if it be truly proved; for according to the Saying of *Tertullian*, *Id verum quodcunq; primum.* Error being but a Depravation of Truth, Truth muſt have been before it. Cuſtom grounded upon the Veneration we have for Learned and Pious Men of ancient Times, hath given them the Name of *Fathers*. *Cum ut vita ad liberos ab illis, ità omnis ad poſteros ab iſtis eruditio mandârit & ſcientia*

entia. Yet a falſe Pretenſion to *Anti-*
Serm. 7. *quity* hath ever done Diſſervice to the Cauſe intended to be ſupported by it. The *Arcadians* (tho' an ancient People) became ridiculous when they boaſted themſelves to be προσέληνοι, before the Moon; no Body need confute it. Moreover, there are *Nugæ* βεκκεσελήνικαὶ, very aged Trifles, which being of none, or ill Uſe to Mankind, gain nothing by their Antiquity, but ſtand a Reproach to the Wiſdom of ſo many Generations, which have ſuffered their Continuance ſo long to ſo little purpoſe.

The Argument of the Woman is urged with both theſe Inconveniences:

1. It was groſs Ignorance and bold Preſumption, to contend with *Jeruſalem* in the Point of Antiquity. *Scaliger* ſaith of the *Samaritans*, That they were *Totius antiquitatis ignariſſimi.* They never heard of the Revolt of the Ten Tribes, but believed themſelves fixed in *Samaria* ever ſince the coming of *Moſes* out of *Egypt*, and never had ſuffered any Alteration of State or Religion. This was the Policy of their Governors to admit only the *Pentateuch*, had they enlarged their Rule of Faith to the other

ther Books, they might have been convinced upon Matter of Fact, admitting no Denyal, That the Temple in *Jeruſalem* was built by *Solomon* two hundred Years before *Samaria* was founded, and almoſt a thouſand before their Temple by *Sanballat*. Such monſtrous Deluſions do Men willingly, out of miſtaken Intereſt, ſubmit to, when a very eaſy Enquiry would ſet the Truth before their Eyes. Serm.

2. If Antiquity had been for them, their Worſhip could never have ſatisfied an inquiſitive Mind. The Worſhip of *Images* is irrational, contrary to the Law of Nature and God's Revelation; againſt which it is Folly to pretend Preſcription; and what was the Advantage, if it could not bring them to Salvation?

The loud Boaſtings the Church of *Rome* ſtill makes of her Antiquity, if examined, falls altogether as ſhort of their Pretenſions; it being no hard matter to fix the time when moſt of theſe Doctrines in Controverſy were introduced.

Very weak are the Arguments from Scripture or Reaſon, by which the *Pope*

claims his *Infallibility*; yet doth he
Serm. 7. make more Uſe of it, and puts it upon greater Employment than God doth his. God doth not forbid us to uſe, or command us to believe any thing contrary to our Reaſon or our Senſes; but the *Infallibility* of him of whom I ſpeak, pretends to alter the very Natures of things which God hath ordered; it ſilences Errors, diſpels Hereſies, and preſerves it ſelf, as Opiates cure Diſeaſes, not by taking away the Cauſe, but by *Stupefaction* of the Senſe. Neither doth the *Pope*, I perſwade my ſelf, nor they who plead for him, believe him infallible; Yet may every Man be infallible, if he will, by taking heed never to give Aſſent to any Propoſition, but of which he hath a clear and diſtinct Perception. Now, Divine *Revelation* commands our Aſſent as powerfully as the moſt diſtinct Perception; ſo that he, who always in Matters of *Faith* ſhall ſpeak as the Oracles of God, in the Words which Scripture uſeth, will be as *infallible* as he who ſpeaks *firſt Notions*, or *Mathematical Axioms*. But of this I ſhall ſay no more, only tell you a ſhort Experiment, Matter of Fact, and your ſelves ſhall make the Application.

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The late new Philoſopher having raiſed to himſelf a deſerved Fame, by ſeveral extraordinary Inventions in Nature and the Sciences, at length thought he had found out a fit Habitation for the Soul of Man, where ſhe ſhould ſit in Majeſty, as on a Throne, attended by numerous Companies of Vital and Animal Spirits, all waiting with Diligence (as *Solomon*'s Servants upon him) to execute her Commands throughout every part of the little World. But it happened not long ſince, that, by the Diſſection of an exact and curious Hand, this Imperial Seat of the Soul is found to be but a Glandule, the Sink of the Brain, the Receptacle of noxious and excrementitious Humours; in which ſo refined and noble a Subſtance diſdains to be confined. Serm. 7.

If *Infallibility*, *Tranſubſtantiation*, *Worſhip of Saints and Images*, *Indulgences*, had been known in the firſt four hundred Years, I am apt to believe *Celſus*, *Porphyrie*, *Julian*, would not have paſſed over ſuch fit Subjects of their Wit; and that *Arrius*, *Pelagius*, and other Men of natural Reaſon, would have diſputed the Abſurdity of thoſe Doctrines, and have got to themſelves the

Name of *Hereticks* upon leſs odious
Serm. 7. Terms than by denying the *Divinity of Chriſt*, and *the Grace of God*. Many of the *Popes*, before the *Council of Trent*, have nulled the Decrees of their Predeceſſors; dealing with St. *Peter*'s Faith, as they do with his *Church*, in *Rome*; every one aiming to eternize his Memory by new Additions to the Fabrick, tho' it be by pulling down what the former *Pope* erected: Which demonſtrates the Novelty of the Opinions ſo introduced.

Since then ſo it is with the Church of *Rome*, That ſhe retains ſuch an exact Reſemblance with a Church which our Saviour hath condemned,

1. Let us well conſider where to fix our Faith and our Obedience; let us examine carefully which Church is that which can juſtly challenge this Characteriſtick, *That ſhe knows what ſhe worſhips*. I muſt and do reſolve, That it is our own (tho' not excluſive of all others) into which we have been Baptized, our Dear Mother, the *Church of England*. For tho' I dare not Damn all of the *Romiſh* Communion, (having no Authority ſo to do) yet I will ſay for

for my ſelf, (in the Words of an Excellent Perſon) *That I believe I could not be ſaved without an extraordinary Mercy, pretending to believe thoſe things, which ſo long as I have the Scriptures and my Reaſon, I never can.* And I ſhould find my ſelf much confounded, if being, however unworthy, a Profeſſor of Divinity in this Church, ſhould I not, in ſome tollerable meaſure, be able to defend it, and maintain it the moſt Primitive of any we know of in the World. Serm. 7.

It hath been obſerved, That Religion and Learning both had their Births in the *Eaſt*, and that they have travelled like the Sun towards his Setting in the *Weſt*, being conſtantly purſued, as he is by Darkneſs, Ignorance, and Superſtition, and a Pious, Divine Poet of our own, thought Religion was leaving this our Iſland, ready to take its Flight into *America*. God grant he may not prove a *Poet* in the ancient Signification of the Word, that is, a Prophet.

What then remains to be done? It is not meerly crying out, *Oh! do not ſlay our Mother.* But I will tell you,

When

Serm. 7. When the Inhabitants of *Delos* were in great Diſtreſs, they conſulted the *Oracle of Apollo*, their God, what they ſhould do to be relieved: He anſwered, They muſt *double the Cube*, make his Altar, which was *Cubical*, ſo big again, retaining the ſame regular Figure: For no Heathen *Deity* would ever ſuffer the primitive Form of his Altar ſhould be changed. And God commanded *Moſes*, That the Tabernacle ſhould be made exactly according to the Faſhion thereof ſhewed him in the *Mount*.

The Oracle did not intend only to put their Inventions upon the Rack, in ſearch after ſo difficult a Problem: Its Deſign was to excite them to the Study of *Geometry*, which was, at that time, much decayed and neglected.

Let us try what may be done in Religion; let us double our Zeal, encreaſe our Devotion to the Altar we worſhip at, the Church we profeſs our ſelves Members of, and ſhew to all the World how glorious a Reformation of Life our reformed Conſtitution in Worſhip is able to effect.

2. Let us return our unfeigned Thanks to God, whoſe never ſleeping Providence

Providence hath ever taken care of this oft diſtreſſed *Church*; who, as on this Day, hath twice wrought Deliverance for us, and reſtored it like new Heavens and a new Earth, out of that confuſed *Chaos*, into which both Church and State were well nigh diſſolved, and by many wonderful Preſervations, through dangerous Difficulties, hath conducted it, and we hope, ſettled it in a laſting State of Tranquility. In which, tho' there may remain ſomething of Diſſatisfactions, yet will they tend only to a firmer Settlement. As in the firſt Fabrication of the World, all the parts of Matter did not in a moment comply, to make up that beautiful Contexture, in which the Univerſe now appears; but there was time given, that the Ruggedneſs of ſome Atoms, and the Aſperity of their Angles might be worn into a Smoothneſs, neceſſary to make up that placid Compoſure, wherein all things to this Day ſtill remain. Serm. 7.

3. *Laſtly*, There was a time when the People of *Rome*, in flattering Applauſe to their Emperor, cauſed all their Temples to be ſhut up, judging, That

Serm. 7. That the Proſperity of the Common-wealth might ſecurely depend upon his Valour and Wiſdom, without the uſual Prayers made to their God. But let us of this Nation declare our Love to, and the true Opinion we have of his Majeſty's Princely Conduct, by opening our *Temples*, and offering up frequent Thanks to God for ſo great a Bleſſing.

Let us pray, That he would protect and proſper him, our *Cyrus*, the King, βασιλεὺς τ' ἀγαθὸς, κεφαλεύς τ' ἀιχμητής, whom he hath raiſed our *Deliverer* from, and *Defence againſt Tyranny over Souls and Bodies.*

That *he who now governs the* τὸ ναυάγιον τῆς πόλεως, the *toſſed and almoſt Shipwrackt Condition of Church and State*, and with great *Magnanimity and Skill* guides the Ship in ſo Tempeſtuous a *Sea*, may at length fix it in the Harbour of laſting *Peace* and *Happineſs.*

That all Stormy Paſſions being quieted, every one may find ſome Ground of Satisfaction and Obedience, if all cannot acquieſce in the ſame, as in Natural *Philoſophy* the Patrons of contrary Hypotheſis do unanimouſly, and with equal

equal Devotion, conclude the Power, Goodneſs, and Wiſdom of the Great Creator, and the Duty due unto him. Serm. 7.

The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, &c.

The End of the Seventh Sermon.

SERMON VIII.

Philippians I. 27.

Only let your Converſation be as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt.

THE Holy Scriptures, when they ſpeak of the Converſion of Sinners, do conſtantly repreſent that Change of Life in ſuch Inſtances, which as they ſignify the great Difficulty of the Change, ſo do they illuſtrate the Excellency and Uſefulneſs of true Religion. To become truly Good, (in their miraculous Language) is, *to be born again, to be a new Creature, to be turned from Darkneſs to Light*; it is even a *Reſurrection* from the Dead. Piety therefore is the Life, the Joy, the Comfort and Refreſhment of the World, the Conqueſt and Triumph of devout Minds over all Enemies and Oppoſitions. Such is its admirable Nature, that it never can be worſted;

worſted; much leſs deſtroyed. Some
Serm. 8. Philoſophers, the better to explain the Immortality of the Soul, make it a Subſtance *indiſcerpible*, that it cannot be divided, and *penetrable*, that it can retire more and more into it ſelf. A juſt and adequate Piety, which is a Complexion of all Graces, admitting of no Separation or Diminution, it likewiſe delights to diffuſe it ſelf over the greateſt Sphere of Beings, it would willingly inform the whoſe World, and work it into its own Nature. It can enjoy the Pleaſures of Life, the Splendors of Fortune; but if theſe be denyed, if it be oppreſſed and perſecuted, it can retire into it ſelf, and live and burn even in Darkneſs, or in the Grave, like thoſe eternal Lamps which never ſee the Sun.

Hence it is, that all thoſe Methods which the Enemies of true Religion have taken for its Ruin, have had a contrary Effect, and ended in its Advantage. *The Wiſdom of Men being Fooliſhneſs with God.* In the preſent Caſe of St. *Paul*, himſelf tells us, Verſ. 12. *I would ye ſhould underſtand, Brethren, that the things which have happened to me, have fallen out rather to the Furtherance of the Goſpel:* And then he gives

gives them this excellent Exhortation in the Text, That whatever ſhould befall them, their chief Care ſhould be, *to have their Converſation as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt.* In which Words I will conſider, Serm. 8.

I. The Ground and Occaſion of this Exhortation.

II. The Reaſonableneſs and Uſefulneſs of it.

When the Apoſtle doth introduce his Exhortation with ſo ſolemn an Emphaſis, *Only let your Converſation be*, &c. if not excluding, yet making all other Advice leſs efficacious, he doth clearly imply the Church of the *Philippians* to be at preſent under ſome Difficulty and Affliction, which this Advice here given would beſt enable them to undergo. Now, if we read this Epiſtle, we ſhall find two things had befallen them, which could not but be the Cauſe of great Trouble to them:

1. *The Impriſonment of St.* Paul.
2. *The more publick Preaching of falſe Teachers.*

Serm. 8. By both which, that Gospel, both of Faith and Manners, which they had received, was much clouded and oppressed.

I. The Imprisonment of St. *Paul* at *Rome*. He tells them of his Bonds, Vers. 7. *My Bonds in Christ are manifest in all the Palace, and in all other places*, Vers. 13, 14. *Many of the Brethren in the Lord waxing confident by my Bonds.* This must needs be their Grief and great Affliction, if we consider,

1. The exceeding Usefulness of his Person. St. *Paul* was the Apostle of the *Gentiles*; to him they owed their Conversion: By his Zeal and Industry they became Christians; by his Care and Providence they were rooted and confirmed. He was of universal Benefit to the World; upon him was the Care of all the Churches: His unwearied Motions (as of the Sun) dispersed the Light of the Gospel from *East* to *West*, even to our own Nation. Ἐκκαίομαι, saith St. *Chrysostom*, I am all on Fire when I speak of St. *Paul*. And indeed whom would it not inflame to read that admirable Synopsis of Sufferings, 2 *Cor.* 11.

11. *In Labours more abundant, in Stripes above measure, in Prisons more frequent, in Deaths often.* πάντα ἰσχύω, *I can do and suffer all things:* I have Courage and Strength to conquer all Opposition. His Endowments, whether of Nature or Grace, made him appear designed, who only was fit to work so great a Conquest over the Heathen World. They stood in need now to be comforted and encouraged by his Presence, instructed by his Heavenly Doctrine, and Pious Converse. The Loss which the whole Church, and the *Philippians* in particular, had, could not but make his Imprisonment a great Affliction. Serm. 8.

It was a gracious Promise which God made to the *Jewish* Church, (*Isa.*30.20.) *Yet shall not thy Teachers be removed into Corners; but thine Eyes shall see thy Teachers.* The Removal of them was esteemed the sorest Punishment.

The general Use, and even Necessity of the Office of the Ministry, is signified by the very Names and Titles by which they are called. Under the Law they are called *Seers, and Prophets.* They declared the Mind of God in Cases extraordinary; they shewed the People their Transgressions, foretold

God's Judgments, and as Embaſſadors
Serm. 8. from him, promiſed Reconciliation upon Repentance.

In the Goſpel, they are the *Light of the World*, *Apoſtles*, *Meſſengers*, who brought the glad Tidings of Peace from God to Man, *Biſhops* or *Guardians* of the Church, Titular Angels.

So *Pallas* is by *Solon* called, ἐπίσκοπος, Biſhop of *Athens*: They are ſtiled Rulers, Labourers, Shepherds, when they are ſmitten, the Flock muſt needs be ſcattered.

Admirable are thoſe *Epiſtles*, and full of great Conſolation, which our Apoſtle, and other Primitive Biſhops, have dated from their Priſons: By them they have made the whole World their Congregation, and thoſe Sermons to continue to the end of all things, being dead, they yet ſpeak. Yet to hear St. *Paul* in the Pulpit, from his Mouth to receive the Words of eternal Life, to ſee with our Eyes Vertue alive, walking and converſing with us; to hear the τὸ κεντρικὸν καὶ δεκτήριον, the Pungency and Vehemence of his Reproofs, the Mildneſs and Compaſſion of his Exhortations; this is ſurprizing enough to enliven any not quite dead and ſenſeleſs.

To

To have our wiſeſt and our beſt Friend, Phyſician, and lover of our Souls near at hand to reſolve our Doubts, to comfort our Sorrows, to ſupport our Weakneſs, to inſpire us with Courage againſt the moſt daunting Circumſtances of Life; theſe Advantages make up a Happineſs, which none can ſo well underſtand as they who want them. Serm. 8.

2. Their Grief for St. *Paul*'s Impriſonment was founded in that mutual Love which was betwixt them.

Chriſt is the great Example of the Love Paſtors owe to thoſe committed to their Care, *John* 10. 11. *I am the good Shepherd, I lay down my Life for the Sheep.* And the *Noble Army of Martyrs* in all Ages have made wonderful returns, having teſtified the Love they had for Chriſt, by the Torments they endured. This made St. *Ignatius* triumphant over a moſt cruel Death, ὁ Ἐμὸς μου ἐσταύρωται, his Love was crucified for him, διὰ ζημιοῦμαι, ſaith *Gordius* the Martyr in St. *Baſil*, μὴ δυνάμενος ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ πολλάκις ἀποθανεῖν, *What a loſs is it to me that I cannot die often for my Saviour.* This Example of the Biſhop of our Souls hath

been followed by infinite numbers of
Serm. 8. those whom he hath made *Overseers* of his Flock, not like that timorous Orator, who by an Eloquent Oration having perswaded his Citizens into a War, was the first who threw down his Shield and run away, but as resolved Captains under Christ of our Salvation have stood in the Breach, entertained and broken the Fury of the Enemy. Ἐπίσκοπος in *Homer* (the first time it occurs in any Author) is explained by *Eustathius* ὁ σκοπούμενος εἰς πολεμίους κατάσκοπος, as the *Watchman* in the Prophet to tell what of the Night? What means this dark and gloomy Face of things? To descry the Motions and Advances of the Enemy, being in the Words of St. *Paul* set *for the defence of the Gospel*; in these and many more Instances the Ministers of the Gospel have shewed their true Love to their People, whom they esteem their Joy and their Crown when they *stand fast in the Lord*, their perseverance in the Faith is the Solace of all their Labours, a Recompense next to that they shall receive in the Resurrection of the Just.

In our days Christian Profession is a delicate thing, without any danger to our

our Bodies or Eſtates, we are Profeſſors without fear of being Confeſſors, we obtain the Name of Chriſtians by the ſole *Baptiſm* of *Water*, without that of *Blood*, ſo we have nothing to do but to ſave our Souls, which yet may prove as hard a Task amidſt the uninterrupted enjoyment of Pleaſures, as in the ſeverities of a Perſecution. Serm. 8.

However, tho' the Miniſters of the Goſpel are not now properly *Martyrs* for their Flocks, yet there are other Inſtances of that ſincere Love they bear them; I will not urge the Labour they take in the performance of their Duty, which, tho' it be by ſome (who know not what it is to fix the Mind in Study one Hour) ſlighted and eſteemed Nothing, yet muſt it be acknowledged that intenſe and conſtant Operations of the Mind have great influence upon the Body, and that many, (like the Candle which burns in their Cloſets) have ſpent themſelves in giving Light to others, and the Hours they have told in the Study and in the *Church*, have made their Glaſs of Life run out the ſooner. Conſider

1. The

Serm. 8.

1. The great Concernment for the Salvation of Souls, which, (tho' common to all good Men, yet in ſome Reſpects being a greater Charge upon Paſtors, is an evident Teſtimony of their Love to their Flocks.

How do they Mourn in ſecret, and wiſh their Eyes Fountains of Tears, to Weep Day and Night for the Wickedneſs of the Earth? To hear ſome think themſelves Witty in diſputing againſt the Being of a God, (Fools!) without whoſe Exiſtence they can never prove their own, or denying his Providence, when no Body would chuſe to live in a World where a Wiſe and Good God hath nothing to do. How ſad is it to ſee Men take Pains, put their Fancies upon the Rack, to prove they are but Beaſts, and have no Souls, when that very Wit they ſo abuſe, demonſtrates that they have? Would it not grieve any one to the very Heart, to ſee how ſome value and applaud themſelves if they think they have found out a new ſeeming Argument againſt Religion, or hit upon a freſh Expreſſion abuſive of the *Holy Scriptures*? Is it not Pity to behold a good Judgment, quick Wit, and all the Powers of an Immortal Soul, in great

great degrees to evaporate and ſpend themſelves upon mean, low, and very ſinful Objects? Is the whole Circle of Sciences ſo perfected? Are all thoſe Uſeful and Noble Speculations in Nature, begun by the exalted Genius of Antiquity, ſo quite exhauſted, that nothing remains to the Wit of the preſent Age, for its Exerciſe, beſides the Ignominious Employment (if not of inventing, yet) of perfecting the two moſt deſtructive and moſt ſtupid pieces of Ignorance the World ever knew, *Atheiſm* and *Immorality? Ah ſinful Nation, laden with Iniquity, the whole Head is ſick, and the whole Heart faint!* There is not one Dram of true Wit or Courage in all their moſt elaborate Eſſays compoſed in defiance of God and his Religion, they are all Dull, Nonſenſe, Madneſs, and Folly. Serm. 8.

The Sorrow of Heart which good Men have for the Sins of the World hath ſometimes ſeized them to ſuch a degree, that they were no longer able to bear, but have fled from a Wicked Generation, as Men do from places infected with the Plague, they retired into Caves and Deſarts, that their Eyes might not ſee, nor their Ears hear the Indig-

Serm. 8. Indignities daily offered to God and his Religion; they choſe rather to live amongſt *Lions* and *Tigers*, than to behold the wilful degeneracy of Human Nature, by which Men made themſelves more *Beaſts*, becauſe more irrational; this they ſadly might bewail, but had no hopes to reform, ſo hid themſelves from ſo dolorous a Spectacle.

This indeed ſhews their great abhorrence of all Impiety; but if we rightly conſider, it will be a ſign of trueſt Courage and Love of Souls, to abide, live, and converſe in that evil World wherein our Lot is fallen, rather than to withdraw from it: Was not the Phyſician ordained for them that are Sick? The Pilot to guide the *Ship* in a Tempeſtuous Sea? Doth it not betray as much Unphiloſophical Cowardice to retire from the World, becauſe it is bad, as it would do to retire from the Body, by killing thy ſelf, becauſe it is a Body of Sin, and infectious to the Soul? This is true Chriſtian Fortitude, to preſerve thy Virtue amongſt numerous Temptations to Vice; this is great Charity to Souls, by thy Pious Example, by the Holineſs and Wiſdom of thy Converſation to put ſome ſtop to the Wickedneſs

of

of the Age, to correct that vitious Infection which ſpreads ſo far, ſo faſt, to fight Valiantly for the Honour of God and the Salvation of Immortal Souls. Serm. 8.

It is to this Courage, to this Charity in the *Primitive Confeſſors* and Martyrs, that we owe the Chriſtianity we enjoy. Had they withdrawn from the Temptations and Vices, from the Torments and cruel Deaths, which made up thoſe times; we, with former Generations, had been loſt in that Infidelity which we are now ready to Apoſtatize into.

Our pretended *Wits* would not have had the Labour of inventing new Syſtems of Impiety; there had been no need of Advocates for Atheiſm, it would have been the radicated Corruption of all Mankind. They nobly reſiſted unto Blood, bravely endured Torments unſufferable, that they might tranſmit the pure Religion to Poſterity, and by their Deaths, have ſaved the *Souls* of many Generations.

II. The ſecond Cauſe of their Trouble, was, The Encreaſe of falſe Teachers.

They were foretold indeed by our *Saviour*, and the Apoſtle ſaith, There muſt

Serm. 8.

must be *Hereſies*; but it is a Matter of great Wonder, how they ſhould begin, or find Entertainment; how they could withſtand the powerful Preaching of the *Apoſtles*, contend with the Demonſtration of the Spirit, or outface an Age of *Miracles!*

It ſeemeth, that which is now the Policy of our *Romiſh Church* againſt the Reformation, (to deſtroy it by dividing it) was then the Policy of the Heathen World againſt Chriſtianity. Since every thing, the more it is divided, the nearer it is to nothing. *Gnoſticiſm* was a Sect which joined the greateſt Contrarieties, the Profeſſion of Chriſt, with the Pleaſures of Life and Worldly Policy. Licenciouſneſs and Compliance in times of Perſecution, were the chief Doctrines which they Preached, made the whole of their Religion: Than which, nothing can be more contradictory to the Goſpel of Chriſt, which enjoins exacteſt Holineſs of Converſation, and promiſeth the Rewards of Heaven only to thoſe who take up the Croſs, and *endure unto the end.*

Diviſions in the Church have ever, in good Men, cauſed great Thoughts of Heart; not only becauſe of the Advantage

tage they give the Enemy, but from the true Love they have to Truth, and the ſincere Deſire of its Encreaſe in the World. What Affliction muſt it be to the pious *Philippians*, to ſee their Church, but lately planted by ſo Great an *Apoſtle*, now in danger to be rooted up by falſe Pretenders to *Chriſtianity?* who would not ſuffer the Loſs of any Worldly thing for *Chriſt*, but ever denied him, upon any Fears of Perſecution, with their Mouths, tho' they ſaid they *believed in their Hearts.* God himſelf did never yet try the utmoſt of a Chriſtian's *Patience*, neither hath he created any Object able to equal it, unleſs it be the good Man's Concernment for the Loſs of the true Religion. This was the Caſe of the *Philippians*, and the Occaſion of the Advice, *Only let your Converſation be as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt:* The Reaſonableneſs and Uſefulneſs of which, we now come to conſider; and that will appear in theſe two things: That

Serm. 8.

I. A Conformity of our Lives to the true Religion we profeſs, is the ſureſt Means to preſerve it, either with reſpect to *God*, or to *Religion* it ſelf.

1. With

Serm. 8.

1. With reſpect to *God*. As he is the Fountain and the Author, ſo is he the Diſpenſer of true Religion, according to the Wiſdom of his Providence, to the Nations of the Earth.

The World had lived out more than half its time, before he was pleaſed to acquaint it with that *Name* by which alone it could be ſaved; or to manifeſt that Religion in which the Happineſs of Mankind is contained.

If we may judge of the Reaſon by God's Proceedings ſince, we muſt conclude, that the Delay of our Saviour's appearance was, becauſe that World was not worthy of him; God foreſaw that the Men of the former Generations were not prepared, either ſo Heartily to receive his Doctrine, or ſo Zealouſly to defend it, for ever ſince it hath taken up its Habitation amongſt thoſe who durſt be its Friends, in what part of the Earth ſoever, and there is no Reaſon that the Excellent Nature of true Religion ſhould be confined to live amongſt Stocks and Stones, where *Men* will not receive it, to endeavour to influence the Bodies of thoſe whoſe Souls and Reaſon do reject it; why ſhould God expoſe it to ſuch Contempt? Why ſhould he

he entruſt ſuch a Talent to be buried, and made uſeleſs? Offer ſo Heavenly a Jewel to Baſe and Earthly Minds? It was not at ſo eaſie a Rate that this Goſpel was made known unto the World. Serm. 8.

The great deſire God hath of the Happineſs of his Creatures, hath made him ſhew his long Suffering, in the continuance of the true Religion, even to the moſt unworthy People.

The Temple in *Jeruſalem*, the centre of the *Jewiſh* Worſhip, how often was it threatned with utter Deſolation? by the *Chaldæans*, by *Antiochus*, by *Craſſus*, by *Pompey?* but the Ruin was never total, till *Titus*, (according to our Saviour's Propheſie) left not one Stone upon another, and Ploughed up the Foundations of the City. *God's Spirit would no longer ſtrive*, then were heard theſe aſtoniſhing Words, *Let us go hence*, God forſook his own Houſe, *the City which he loved.*

2. With reſpect to *Religion* it ſelf.

One ſpeaking of the ill Succeſs the Chriſtians had in the *Holy War*, (which he imputes to their Unchriſtian Lives) gives us this Obſervation, *Eſt enim (ut aſſeritur) quoddam, latente Divino Secreto,*

in

Serm. 8. *inſitum ipſi Terræ Sanctæ, ut obſtinate Peccantes Chriſtianos diu ſufferre non poteſt, There is in the Nature of the Holy Land an Antipathy infuſed by God, that it cannot long endure the ſinful Lives of Chriſtians.*

In all Societies the breach of thoſe Fundamental Laws, upon which they were at firſt founded, doth certainly forerun their *diſſolution.*

There are two general Cauſes of the changes in Religion, *abſurd Opinions*, and *Manners contrary to Profeſſion*, the former is in many Caſes ſo intolerable an Impoſition upon the Natural Light and Underſtanding of Mankind, that the Cheat will ſome time or other be diſcovered, the Light will break forth and diſpel thoſe Errors, which have no foundation but in darkneſs and ignorance of the Truth. The latter, Holy Principles and Unholy Manners, is a contradiction, one part of which doth naturally tend to deſtroy the other; and tho' the primary Deſign of God was, That the Precepts of the Goſpel ſhould entirely conquer the Vices of Mankind, and vanquiſh all Wickedneſs from off the Earth, yet when, from the obſtinate pravity of Mens Wills, that deſired

Effect

Effect cannot be attained, God's Juſtice will provide for his own Religion; he will remove it from Nation to Nation, and if yet (like Chriſt its Author) it hath not in this World *where to lay its Head*, he will take it up into Heaven. Serm. 8.

II. The Conformity of our Lives to our Religion, will be the greateſt Comfort in all Afflictions.

1. Becauſe it will compoſe and fix our Minds, the Practice of it will confirm us in the Truth of it. Nothing makes Men more indifferent to Piety than the Diſuſe of it. The Worthineſs of Goodneſs is not known but by the Exerciſe of it. Chriſt tells us, *If a Man do the Will of my Father*, he ſhall know the Divinity of it. Experience of its Excellency will fully anſwer all the Objections vain Wit can make againſt it; as the Conſcience every one hath of the Freedom of his *Will*, hath lately been made the beſt Argument to put an end to the Controverſies about it. *Horace* (whoſe Wit the moſt conceited of this Age will acknowledge equal to their own) gives the Reaſon why he changed from one Sect of Philoſophy to another,

ther, till at laſt he became the Diſciple
Serm. 8. of *Epicurus*, the moſt perfect *Atheiſt* of all, becauſe he had been *parcus deorum cultor & infrequens*, very negligent in his Devotions. When, by the rational Practice of our Religion, we are convinced of its Truth, and ſee it with all the Advantages of its pure Nature; we are then reſolved of our Choice, nothing ſhall ſeparate us, we are happy at eaſe, in the midſt of the moſt diſconſolate Apprehenſions, as *Seneca* ſays, *Jupiter will be, when the World ſhall be diſſolved.*

But the unreſolved Man is miſerable, he never gave himſelf leave to examine the Reaſon of his Practice; every little Pretence, joined with Worldly Intereſt, diſcovers his Inſtability, like *Cylinders*, (as the Golden Verſes expreſs it) *their perpetual Turnings* run themſelves into endleſs Miſeries. Whereas great is the Comfort to have well choſen and duly practiſed our Religion, here we fix our Foot, and if we cannot move the World to our *Belief*, the whole World ſhall not move us.

2. The Conformity of our Lives to our Religion, as it will give us Comfort,

fort, by composing and fixing our Minds, so likewise from those Reflecti- Serm. 8.
ons which we ought to make upon our Afflictions.

If amongst those Reasons for which God doth send Afflictions, we can find that our own Sins make no part, that our Miscarriages have not helped to call down the Judgments which we fear; the Thoughts of this will turn our *Darkness into Light*, our Mourning into Joy; and that Vertue which we have so loved, will requite us with everlasting Satisfaction.

There is one thing more which will much alleviate our Concernment in this Particular, *viz.* carefully to distinguish betwixt the *external*, accidental part of Religion, and the inward Vertue and Power of it.

Outward Splendor of Riches and Temporal Authority, are no Essentials of a *true Church*: To dispute learnedly about the *Marks of the Church*, is but a laborious *Vanity*. True Faith and Piety are the only Marks which a *Church* may retain in a State almost of Invisibility, as well as of Worldly Grandeur. It is our Charity to call any Company of Professors, the *Church*; it signifies what

they ought to be, doth not prove that
Serm. 8. they are. We are then not much to be troubled for the want of the Externals of Religion; *not for the Decay of the outward Man*, in the Apoſtle's Words, *by which the inward is renewed more and more.*

The End of the Eighth Sermon.

SERMON IX.

St. Luke XI. 13.

How much more ſhall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

HE who ſhall with Exactneſs ſearch into the Original of the Chriſtian Church, will not with better Reaſon fix its Nativity in any part of Time, than that in which the *Holy Ghoſt* deſcended upon the Apoſtles. The new Creation of the Goſpel, was begun and perfected in moſt of the ſame Methods by which the old material World was made. *Jews, devout, well-diſpoſed* Men out of every Nation under Heaven, were that *Chaos* of firſt Matter, out of which the glorious Fabrick of the Church was formed; the *Spirit of God moved* upon the *Face of theſe Waters*, and by its miraculous

Serm. 9. Operations transformed the dark Deformity of the Human World from Error, Sin and Death, to Truth, Vertue and Immortality. *God ſaid, Let there be Light, and there was Light.* After a Sound from Heaven, as of a *ruſhing, mighty Wind, there appeared cloven Tongues, as of Fire, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt.* Here was the Infuſion of Soul and Life, by the Energy of which Divine Principle the new Heavens and the new Earth, foretold by the Prophets, were produced. Thus was the Chriſtian Church created, but was not, as *Adam*, immediately put into *Eden*, a place of Eaſe and Delight, but in a Wilderneſs full of Bryars and Thorns, Beaſts of Prey and Inhumanity, beſet with Worldly Oppoſitions, and terrible Perſecutions; which depreſſed State and Condition, moved God's tender Compaſſion to Arm her with the Power of Miracles, whereby to convince her Enemies, and inſpire her Friends with Fortitude, and a Courage inſuperable. Which extraordinary Gifts of the *Holy Ghoſt* were continued till the Empire turned Chriſtian, and became a Nurſing-Father to the Infancy of the Church; and then they ceaſed, the Temporal

Temporal Sword ſupplying thoſe Ends in the Encreaſe and Defence of Religion, for which Miracles were at firſt granted. Serm. 9.

But as there is an Almighty Power which ſuſtains and preſerves the World, though it ſhews not it ſelf in ſuch miraculous Inſtances as were in the Creation, all things with Silence, Eaſe and Conſtancy obeying thoſe Laws given them by the Great Creator; ſo likewiſe muſt there be acknowledged, that there are inviſible Operations of the *Holy Spirit* upon the Minds of Men, inclining them to embrace Vertue, and aſſiſting them in all the Difficulties of Religion. This Truth, tho' it hath had its Adverſaries, both in the former and latter Ages of the Church, yet have they ever been confuted and condemned, and the Doctrine of a poſitive and ſupernatural Aſſiſtance of God's Grace pronounced and believed True and Orthodox; which being plainly contained in the Words of our Saviour, and of infinite other Scriptures, ſhall be the Subject of this Diſcourſe. I ſhall prove,

I. The Poſſibility of a Divine ſupernatural Aſſiſtance.

Serm. 9. II. That a Divine Aſſiſtance is highly probable and reaſonable, and as to God's Intentions of Man's Salvation, neceſſary.

I. The Poſſibility of ſupernatural Aſſiſtance. There are ſo few things which can be impoſſible to infinite Power, that it is bold and dangerous to enlarge the Catalogue. Things abſolutely impoſſible, are either ſuch as have no Idea of Entity in any Subject, or in God himſelf. God cannot make a thing to be and not to be at the ſame time, a Body without Dimenſions, or to be in many places at once; or ſecondly, ſuch as imply a Vice or Imperfection; he cannot change the Natures of Good and Evil, he cannot lye, or any ways contradict the eternal Reaſon of things, it being his own Nature. The Divine Power extends to all Poſſibility; ſo that it is better to ſay, There are ſome things which in their own Nature are impoſſible, than that God cannot do them. But to teach, that God cannot create an incorporeal Subſtance, that he cannot foreſee Contingencies, that a Spiritual Being cannot operate upon a Body, are Aſſeverations without any Proof

Proof or Demonſtration. The Manner of thoſe things may be beyond our Reaſon, but were never proved to contain any Contradiction. As to the laſt Inſtance, upon which the Denial of any Spiritual Aſſiſtance is ſolely founded, That a Spirit cannot operate upon a Body, becauſe it would penetrate it, and ſo there would be no Re-action; it is a groſs Conception framed from the Impulſes of the parts of Matter in this material World. For (not to inſtance in Human Souls which do inform their Bodies) God himſelf did operate upon Matter, when he made the World, by the Infuſion of Motion into it. That Motion was put into Matter, is from hence demonſtrated, That if it were natural to it, all the Matter of the Univerſe would, long before this, have wrought it ſelf into the pureſt *Æther*; there would be no Diſtinction of Earth, Water or Air, but the whole World would have been one Homogenial Maſs of Fire. Whereas a certain quantity of Motion being at the Beginning infuſed, which ſtill is preſerved without Increaſe or Diminution; all things remain near the State of their firſt Creation. From whence it is evident, that even thoſe who

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Serm. 9. who hold the *Materiality* of the *Soul*, muſt confeſs that God can act upon it: However, they make Sport with the Word Inſpiration.

2. Moreover, all thoſe who acknowledge a Providence in the World, muſt alſo acknowledge, that God doth operate upon the Minds of Men, ſince in all the Changes which are wrought upon Earth, we can conceive no other way whereby God can effect his Deſigns, than by making Man his Inſtrument, whom he either finds ready to comply with his Purpoſes, or by a ſupernatural Influence makes him ſo. Many are the Examples, not only in Sacred, but Heathen Hiſtory, of two Poſitions clearly laid down in Scripture; *That the Hearts of Kings are in the Hands of God*, and *that he rules the Multitude of the People*, (as it ſhould be tranſlated, *Pſal.* 65. 7.) as he doth the roaring *Waves of the Sea.* A great Inſtance of this providential Act, we *this Day* thankfully commemorate, when, as it is ſaid of *David*, God *bowed the Hearts of all the Men of* Judah, *as the Heart of one Man, ſo that they ſent this Word unto the King, Return thou and all thy*

thy Servants: And I need not mention *a ſecond*, [the late Revolution] which our own Eyes have lately ſeen. Serm. 9.

3. To deny the Poſſibility of Divine Operation upon Human Souls, will take away all manner of Revelation. If ever God did make known his Will to Man, as we are aſſured he did at *ſundry times, and in divers manners, in times paſt, unto the Fathers by the Prophets*, and ſince by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, *Heb.* 1. 1. There is no other way of communicating that his Will, but by impreſſing it upon the Human Soul. If ever there were any Divination or Propheſy, (which all Nations have unanimouſly believed) it proves evidently the Truth which I contend for, that Divine Influences upon Mens Minds are poſſible, and have actually been made.

4. *Laſtly*, The *connate Ideas* Implanted in the Souls of all Mankind, the Exiſtence of God, the common Notions of Good and Evil, the Preſages of future Rewards and Puniſhments, demonſtrate the Poſſibility and Reality of Divine Impreſſions: Since no Reaſon can deny that to be poſſible which hath been

Serm. 9. been done; And if this be certainly done every Moment, when Infinite Souls are put into Human Bodies, then it may be done afterwards as the Divine Power ſhall think fit. I know it hath of old been, and yet is diſputed, whether there be ſuch Original Notions Planted in the Soul, or that all Knowledge is derived from without by the Senſes; which would not be proper here to diſcourſe, but as I do believe the Soul is an Immaterial Being, ſo I cannot think how an Immaterial Being ſhould a long time remain Stupid and Unactive, waiting the Aptitude of Bodily Organs, as it muſt do if there were no Natural Ideas, not to mention other difficulties. So that if either we believe a Creation, or a Providence, if we acknowledge any Revelation or Primitive Knowledge in the Soul, we muſt alſo believe the Poſſibility of Divine Operations.

II. Divine Aſſiſtance is not only Poſſible but highly Reaſonable, and as to Gods intentions of Mans Salvation Neceſſary If we conſider our Obligation to Duty, or our inability to perform it.

1. If

1. If we conſider our Obligation to Duty, which being much greater under the Chriſtian Law than any other Diſpenſation, it is great Reaſon there ſhould be greater Advantages to perform it. That the Chriſtian Religion contains in it ſome peculiar Priviledge in order to Mans Happineſs above any other Religion, ſeems ſo neceſſary to believe, that I can give no other Account why it ſhould be Revealed to the World, were it not the Deſign of God to make more eaſie the way to the Felicity of his Creatures, nor is it eaſie to determine wherein ſuch Priviledge doth conſiſt, but in greater Degrees of *Supernatural Aſſiſtance.* For God always did allow to the World ſomething of his Grace, that he did to the *Jews* is plain from the *Old Teſtament*, and their own Writings, wherein there is frequent mention of the Holy Spirit. Pſ. 143. 10. *Let thy Holy Spirit lead me in the way of Righteouſneſs.* Pſal. 50. 11. *Take not thy Holy Spirit from me, eſtabliſh me with a free Spirit.* That the Heathens had no leſs a Belief and expectation of Divine Aſſiſtance, is evident from their Prayers to God, to deliver

Serm 9. liver them in Dangers and direct them in all Difficulties, ἄγε δέ με ὦ Ζεῦ καὶ σὺ ἡ πεπρωμένη, and *Simplicius* in his Excellent Prayer beſeeches God, συμπαρέξαι ἡμῖν ὡς αὐτοκινήτοις, *to give us ſuch Aſſiſtance as is ſuitable to free Agents.* The Antient Theology of the *Greeks* imputes the Misfortune whereby *Ajax* loſt his Life in the War of *Troy* to that confident boaſting which he made when he firſt ſet out —— ὧδέ μ' ἀνύσει Ζεὺς καὶ τοῦτον θανάτοιο πρὸ ἐμοῦ δορύ, *that his own Spear ſhould defend him better than* Jupiter *himſelf:* How often in *Homer* are his *Hero's* reſolved from Heaven in doubtful Caſes? How often are they inſpired with Counſel, ſtrengthned in Weakneſs, incouraged by Divine Admonitions with more than natural Reſolutions? But admirable is that Repreſentation of the Efficacy of Divine Grace made by the Poet, when *Ulyſſes*, after a long Journey, worn out in combating with the Temptations of the World and Adverſaries of Human Life, returned to his Houſe ſo ſqualid and deformed, that he was both diſowned by his Wife, and deſpiſed by his inſolent Nobles. *Pallas*, inſpired with Vertue, πείσθε χάειν κραδίῃ τε καὶ θυμοῖς, he was

was Divinely beautified, ------ ἀθανασίαν ~~~ ὁμοῖον, *Partaker of the Divine Nature.* Serm. 9. By the Advantage of which ſupernatural Change, he became revered of his Friends, and a terrible Conqueror to his Enemies. If it be ſo then, that the Grace of God, like an univerſal Soul, did always inform and actuate whole Mankind, wherein conſiſts the chief Priviledge of Chriſtianity but in conferring greater Degrees of that Grace? for that it doth not conſiſt ſolely in the clearer Revelation of a future State, or in the advanced Nature and Purity of the Precepts, is clear from this, that it would not at all abate, but augment the Difficulty of attaining Happineſs. The Work and Duty required of us, is more hard, and above our Power, than before, when the World ſtood obliged to lower Degrees of Holineſs, contains ſufficient Power to excite the otherwiſe torpid Negligence of Human Nature, and to enliven it with ſuch a Vigor in the Proſecution of the hardeſt Duties, and to the Attainment of Perfection, as may be able to conquer and over-ballance the Difficulties of all Goſpel Commands, it muſt be conſidered,

1. That

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1. That ſuch is the Conſtitution of our Natures, that Rewards at ſuch a diſtance appear very little in our Eyes, and their influence is much weakned by their ſo far removal from us, as the Light of a Candle more nearly applyed makes a greater impreſſion on our Senſes, than thoſe vaſter Globes of Fire in the Firmament, whoſe Heat muſt by Artificial Glaſſes be contracted, before they appear in any conſiderable Degree Senſible unto us. So likewiſe in Morals, the Rewards of time have a more Quick and Effectual Operation to provoke us to Virtuous or Honourable Actions, then an Infinite and Eternal Happineſs. So that their ſeems ſtill required a prevenient Help to render the Power of the former Efficacious.

2. Without a Supernatural Aſſiſtance, we are ſtill but where we were, becauſe as our Reward is encreaſed, ſo is our Obligation to Duty higher. And there will remain but the ſame Proportion betwixt the Duties and Rewards of the Goſpel, as of any other Diſpenſation.

2. As to the Holy Scriptures which *Pelagius* made together with our Free Will

will to be the onely Grace ſufficient to Salvation, *aliud non eſt Nobiſcum gratia quam Lex, quamque Propheta monens & quam Doctrina Magiſtri*, They are indeed called the Grace of God, being of his free Love and Goodneſs committed to us, containing moſt Divine Precepts of Holineſs, Strongeſt Motives to Obedience, moſt Gracious Promiſes of the Forgiveneſs of Sins, the Holy Spirit and Eternal Life, which firmly believed and frequently applied by ſerious Conſideration, cannot fail to make great Impreſſions, and fill the Mind with pious Reſolutions: Yet there is in moſt Men a natural *Enthuſiaſm*, eaſily excited by the Occurrence of agreeable Objects. An Orator hath great Satisfaction in a piece of Eloquence, compoſed according to Rules, like the Beauty of a Building raiſed by Exactneſs of Art. Truth rejoyces the Soul that is employed in the Search after it. The Invention of one Propoſition in *Geometry* was thought to deſerve a *Hecatomb* of Thankſgiving. *Meric Caſaubon* tells us he could never read the beginning of the ſecond Book of *Lucretius*, but he became Ecſtatick; and another Great *Critick*, his Father, in *Athenæum*, having told us the true Signi- Serm. 9.

fication of παραγλώσσαι, *Guſtare aliud at-*
Serm. 9. *que aliud more faſtidientium, ſic ut in nullo acquieſcas*, adds, that the Pleaſure ariſing from ſuch Elegancies, was, *unica aſſiduarum vigiliarum merces*, the beſt Reward of his hard Studies. *Simplicius* ſays there is that δεινότερον and κινητικὸν, *ſomething ſo operative and moving in Epictetus*, that all not quite dead, muſt needs be excited to the Correction of their Paſſions, by reading him: And he who will not be moved by his Precepts, will be ſenſible of nothing but the Puniſhments of Hell. Such *Elogiums* are infinitely more true of the Holy Scriptures, and yet whatever Paſſions are raiſed by converſing in them, is ſo juſtly acknowledged to preventing Grace, and the Continuance of it to make them laſting and effectual, that the *Socinians* themſelves (no Patrons of the Grace of God) confeſs, what they call, the *Spirit of Patefaction* neceſſary to the Underſtanding of Chriſtianity: So that the Scriptures, abſtracted from Divine Aſſiſtance, will not raiſe us to the Performance of that Light of Duty which they do require, and therefore Divine Aſſiſtance is neceſſary to Salvation.

II. Divine

II. Divine Aſſiſtance will appear highly reaſonable, and as to God's Intentions of Man's Salvation, neceſſary, if we conſider our natural Inability to perform our Duty. Serm. 9.

Pelagius indeed, denying the Neceſſity of Grace, was forced to aſſert, that the Strength of Nature was ſufficient to the fulfilling the whole Law, to reſiſt the ſtrongeſt Temptations, and to arrive at a State of Perfection. *Quod ſatis ad propriam poſſit conferre ſalutem Arbitra libertas, etiamſi Gratia deſit*; making ſole Nature Help enough to attain ſupernatural Happineſs. But this ſounded ſo harſh from a Chriſtian, that he allowed the Word *Grace* in his Theology, as a Word which might be uſed, and would remove that Envy which the utter Denial of it had brought upon him: Yet by *Grace* he meant no more than he did by *Nature*, God's creating us with Free Will, and conſerving us in the ſame. But the *Fathers* demonſtrating, that the Scriptures cannot be underſtood of a natural Grace, but of a *ſupernatural*, exceeding the Power of Nature, he was content to join both together; yet by ſupernatural, he meant only the external Advantage of the Word.

Serm. 9. But this not ſatisfying the *Catholick Belief* he advanced further, but very little to the Diſpute in Hand, granting a Grace of God, whereby Sins are pardoned, which yet he thought not neceſſary to all, becauſe ſome might live without Sin, and thoſe who did fall, might by their own Power recover and raiſe themſelves, not attributed the leaſt Effect to the interior aſſiſtance of the *Holy Spirit*, which being the chief thing urged, at laſt he was forced to confeſs an aſſiſtance, but made it to conſiſt in the *illumination* of our Underſtandings, whereby our Duty is diſcovered not in any poſitive *co-operation*. Laſtly, after ſufficient Confutation and Cenſures of the *Church*, he did confeſs ſome inward Efficacy of the *Divine Spirit*, but ſuch as was only profitable to the making us perform our Duty with more eaſe, but was not altogether neceſſary maintained, to the end that Man might fulfil the Law without any ſupernatural relief, by which ſhort account of his Doctrine and the oppoſition it met with, we ſee the Senſe of the Primitive Church concerning the neceſſity of Grace.

For the *Catholick Fathers* conſidering the darkneſs of our Underſtandings in diſtinguiſh-

diſtinguiſhing betwixt Good and Evil, the frailneſs of our Wills in embracing Good when diſcovered, the weakneſs of our Reſolutions in proſecuting thoſe good Intentions which we ſometimes oblige our ſelves by the frequent Violations of our moſt Religious Promiſes, the languid Inclinations to Good, the violent Propenſions to Evil, the great diſproportion betwixt the number of the Pious and Sinful Actions of our Lives, the ſubtilty of our Adverſary, and the vitious Faculty of our Natures to be deluded, they determined a common *Grace* neceſſary to every Act of Good, and a ſpecial Aſſiſtance in many Caſes; and he that ſhall without prejudice calmly conſider, and ſpeak his own Experience, muſt confeſs, that it is much eaſier to Diſcourſe of the poſſibility of attaining Perfection by the ſtrength of Nature, than it is actually to attain it, eaſier to carry on a plauſible Diſpute in behalf of the Sufficiency of *Free-Will* alone to make us Happy, than it is to demonſtrate the *Theſis* by the impeccability of our Lives. It is true, if when I have committed a ſinful Act I be demanded, was it not in your Power not to have done it? I muſt ſay, it was in my Pow-

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er, becauſe I felt no external force ma-
Serm. 9. king an unnatural impreſſion upon my Faculties; but if we reflect upon the infinite Lapſes which ſtain the Life of the pureſt Saint, how oft he Sins, Repents, and Sins again, how oft we offend againſt the Light of our Reaſon, the perpetual Contradiction betwixt our Wills and trueſt Judgment, the eternal Warfare betwixt our Speculations and Practice, there muſt be acknowledged I know not what to call that Pravity in the Powers of the Soul, which doth much leſſen and detract from that great and noble Principle of ſelf determination we are wont ſo much to brag of; and ſure I am that all conſidering Men, Heathens, Jews, and Chriſtians, have filled their more ſerious Writings with great Complaints, and the denial of this decay in Mankind, with the reparation of it by Chriſt carried both *Pelagius* and *Socinus* out of the way of true Chriſtianity.

3. Beſides theſe two unanſwerable Arguments for the *Grace* of Chriſt, the Catholicks urged a third of equal ſtrength, *Quid Stultius quam orare ut facias quod in poteſtate habeas*, as *Oroſius* diſputes,

diſputes, to what purpoſe are all our Prayers whereby we implore aid againſt the power of Sin, if there be no other to be obtained but what is implanted in our Natures? Why did Chriſt command us to Pray that we be not led into Temptation, if no preventing Efficacy can be added to what we are poſſeſſors of before we make that Petition? *Stulte quid fatigas Deum, fac te felicem* would be rational Advice, therefore *Pelagius* could not endure to hear of that Petition of which St. *Auſtin* uſed much, *Da Domine quod jubes, & jube quod vis*, Enable me, O Lord, to perform what thou commandeſt, and command what thou pleaſeſt; why hath Chriſt inſtituted, and the Church always uſed, the two Sacraments, but that by one we are admitted to the priviledge of God's Grace, and by the other it is renewed and confirmed to prepared Minds: For the concluſion, I will conſider the Reaſons which *Pelagius* and his Followers, alledged in behalf of their Opinion, and they were two principally. Serm. 9.

1. He obſerved the great ſlothfulneſs of Chriſtians in the Duties of Religion, which he thought might be corrected

Serm. 9. and amended if they had a better Opinion of their own ſtrength, and indeed we muſt acknowledge with a Learned Man, *Sane hodieque Doctrina de ἀδυναμίᾳ noſtra abutuntur plurimi ad fovendam ignaviam.* The Doctrine of irreſiſtible Grace, as it is explained by the *Calviniſts*, lays an immovable ſtop to all Endeavours, and therefore is by *Epiſcopius* reckoned as a Prejudice, which muſt of neceſſity be rooted out of Mens Minds before they can make any Progreſs, either in Practical or Speculative Theology; for to what purpoſe ſhould I attempt any good Action, in order to my Converſion, if it be impoſſible I ſhould be converted before the irreſiſtible *Grace* ſeize on me, and when it doth come it is impoſſible I ſhould not? But he who maintains ſuch extraordinary Illuminations, Suggeſtions, and Aſſiſtance, as do not violently force, but gently invite, not rudely terrify, but ſweetly perſwade the Will of Man, ſhall not extinguiſh but calmly illuminate his Underſtanding, not command his Aſſent with unreaſonable neglect of the Means, but draw it into a Belief of the Concluſion, by a prævious Suggeſtion of thoſe Premiſſes from whence it will neceſſarily

ly follow, which ſhall encourage weak Man to perform the hardeſt Duties, not by annihilating the Abilities of Nature, but by co-operating with it, not by deſtroying thoſe Powers whereby we are Men, but affording thoſe whereby we become Chriſtians; he who thus believes and thus expects the aſſiſtance of *Grace*, lays the ſtrongeſt Foundation of Chriſtian Activity that poſſibly can be imagined, preventing that Heartleſs Deſpair which neceſſarily will ariſe from the Senſe of our own Infirmities, and the ſad Experience of our daily falling into Sin. Serm. 9.

If a Man fall when he is alone, (ſaid *Solomon*) *who ſhall help him up?* If I were to carry on this Chriſtian Warfare in my own Strength, I might have good Reaſon to deſpond I ſhall one Day periſh by the Hand of my Enemy. But if in all the Difficulties of a Religious Life, I may with Reaſon expect the Advantage of a Heavenly Power, it will fill the Mind with better Courage, and a more hearty Reſolution; as he, who when he had prepared his Body by previous Diet, for the *Olympick Race*, making his Prayers to his Gods, told them he had done his Duty, and he now

Serm. 9. now expected they ſhould do theirs: With the ſame Reaſon, but more Modeſty, may a Chriſtian challenge Divine Aſſiſtance, a Supplement to his own induſtrious Preparations. So that this Belief doth not conduce to Sloth and Idleneſs, but to the greateſt Induſtry, and trueſt Courage in the Exerciſe of Chriſtianity.

2. The ſecond Cauſe which moved *Pelagius* to deny the Grace of Chriſt, was, That on one hand he might avoid the *Manichean Fatality*, and on the other, to condemn the Enthuſiaſtick Raptures of the *Euchites*.

To the firſt part, That Divine Aſſiſtance takes away the Liberty of Man's Will. *Deſtruitur voluntas quæ alterius indiget ope*, was a famous Saying of *Cœleſtius*, *& non eſſe liberum arbitrium ſi Dei indigeat auxilio:* But the Fathers took great Care to walk in a middle Path, between *Manicheiſm* and *Pelagianiſm*; neither voiding Liberty of Will, nor rejecting Heavenly Grace, *Liberum arbitrium, non evacuatur per Gratiam ſed ſtatuitur, & Lex non impletur niſi libero arbitrio.* And that there may be this amicable Conjunction, is plain from what

what we have already diſcourſed, That this Heavenly Aſſiſtance communicates it ſelf not by Force and Violence, but in ſuch pacate and gentle Influences which always muſt be maintained reſiſtible. Serm. 9.

As to the Danger of *Enthuſiaſm*, there can be none to ſober and humble Minds, thoſe fond Fancies proceeding no leſs from Pride and the ambitious Temper of the Soul, than the melancholick Conſtitution of the Body: And a greater meaſure of true Divine Illumination, is ſo far from giving any real Occaſion to it, that to pray for a conſtant Supply from the *Holy Spirit*, is the only Remedy to ſubdue it. And he that ſhall arrive to a Conqueſt over bodily Paſſions, and hath vindicated a juſt Dominion to true Reaſon, may reſt aſſured, that he hath this *Holy Spirit*, altho' he neither Propheſy, nor do any other kind of Wonder.

Since therefore ſo it is, that we have ſuch Promiſes of Heavenly Aſſiſtance, 1. The Complaints that are made of the Difficulties of Religion, muſt be very unreaſonable: To ſay they are inſuperable before we try them, is Childiſh Folly; to ſay they are ſo, even in Oppoſition to the Divine Grace, is falſe and

Serm. 9. and injurious. By ſuch Repreſentations, we both diſcourage our own natural Powers, and do deſpite to that Holy Spirit, before whom the moſt Gigantick Force of our Enemies, to hinder our Entrance into the Promiſed Land, would aſſuredly vaniſh, and be nothing.

2. We muſt yield our ſelves obedient and tractable to all its Motions. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life: If he lead thee thro' a dry and barren Wilderneſs, thro' croſs Paths, and Ways beſet with Bryars and Thorns, ſtrong Temptations, and great Difficulties, take heed thou murmureſt not, nor blame his Conduct. He that followeth him, ſhall not walk in Darkneſs. Even there will he feed thee with Bread from Heaven, and at length bring thee to everlaſting Reſt and Peace.

O Lord, from whom all good things do come, grant to us, thy humble Servants, that by thy Holy Inſpiration we may think thoſe things that be good; and by thy merciful Guiding, may perform the ſame, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, &c.

The End of the Ninth Sermon.

SERMON X.

Eccleſiaſtes XII. 1.

Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth, while the evil Days come not, nor the Years draw near, when thou ſhalt ſay, I have no Pleaſure in them.

SInce Old Age is what all Men deſire to attain, and the Incommodities thereof are many, very irkſome and grievous; the only thing which remains for a Wiſe Man to do, is, To make the beſt Preparation againſt it, well to provide whatſoever may afford thoſe Supports and Conſolations which ſo evil a part of Human Life may require. That when, by Death, this *Theatre* ſhall be diſſolved, he having rightly behaved himſelf in this laſt moſt difficult *Act*, may receive the

Serm. 10 the Applauſe and Reward of the Great Maſter of the *Stage*. This was the Intent of *Solomon*, to recommend early Piety and religious Practice throughout our former Life as the beſt Comfort under the afflictive Circumſtances of Old Age. Here are plainly two things to be conſidered.

I. *Evil Days ------ Years, when thou ſhalt ſay, I have no Pleaſure in them.*

II. The Preſervative againſt, or the Cure of this *Evil*. *Remember thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth.*

That by *evil Days* Old Age is intended, appears both from the Oppoſition they ſtand in to the Day of *Youth*, and from the Deſcription in the following Verſes, ſo exact in all particulars, that it repreſents to our Thoughts the very Picture of Life decayed, and fully juſtifies the Name of *evil Days*. The Evil whereof, Wiſe Men have comprehended under theſe following Heads.

I. That Old Age deprives us of the Activity of Life, renders us incapable of Buſineſs, and Management of Affairs in the World.

There

There is wisely implanted in the Nature of all Men a strong Desire of Fame and Glory; which not being to be attained in a slothful, idle way of living, this laudable Ambition urges them upon great and honourable Enterprizes, in which the more there are concerned, the greater will be the Renown due to the right Performance of them. Besides, there is an unspeakable Satisfaction which generous Minds feel in promoting the Interest and Benefit of Mankind. But when that time comes which *Solomon* represents, *when the Sun, the Light, the Moon, and the Stars, shall be darkened*, the Night of Life wherein *no Man can work*, overtakes us; when the *Clouds return after the Rain*; no sooner is one Fit of Pain or Sickness over, but there appear the Indications and *Symptoms* of another in a continued Succession: So that all the remainder of Life must be only Passion. Serm. 10

Now all thy gladsom Days are gone, all thy youthful Pleasure vanished. *The Keepers of the House tremble, and the strong Men bow themselves; now is the Silver Cord loosed, the Golden Bowl is broken, the Pitcher at the Fountain*, Vers. 6. No Distribution of Nourishment to the

the Head for the ſupply of Spirits, no
Serm. 10 ſecretion or ſeparation of Choler or other Humors purifying the Maſs of Blood, *but the Wheel is broken at the Ciſtern*, the circulation is ſtopt, the Heart not without difficulty either opening or contracting, now the Man ſees a ſtop put to that briskneſs of Spirit, and the Effects of that Wiſdom which made him Conſiderable in the World, ſought to and reſpected, he who was lately the *Oracle* of Law and Reaſon, now ſees thoſe Chambers empty, formerly crowded by Multitudes, who Purchaſed his *Oracles* at any Rate of Money and Admiration; the Learned *Phyſitian*, whoſe Skill in his Profeſſion, by the Cures performed, had made many Miſerable People Happy, now changes the Scene, forced to act the *Patient*, and the Remedies whereby he did much good to others prove unprofitable to himſelf; the Laborious Divine, whoſe Bleſſed Work it was to cure the Diſeaſes of Souls, now unwillingly forſakes the Pulpit, not longer able to diſpenſe Heavenly Truth to his Beloved Congregation; and *Kings* themſelves now experience in how languid a Senſe 'tis ſaid of them, *They never die.*

So

So is the Old Man taken from Action and from Buſineſs, whereby he not only fails of that Honour, formerly on every Occaſion done him, but too often ſees himſelf forgotten and forſaken, thoſe to whom he hath done many Favours prove ungrateful, even his Friends and Relations grow weary of him, when will he die? he doth no good, is a Burden to himſelf and others, which is a Conſideration ſo pungent and grievous, that a good Natur'd Perſon would almoſt be willing to die in Civility, not able to withſtand ſuch obſcure Intimations. Serm. 10

Let us now hear what Reaſon and Religion will ſay to this Complaint, they will loudly tell us,

1. It is moſt fit, convenient, and advantageous, to leave off Worldly Buſineſs before we Die; ſo that all the Harm in this Caſe is, that *Old Age* compels us to that which is our Duty and our Intereſt; for is it not highly reaſonable, that ſince we muſt of neceſſity ſhortly leave this World, we begin by degrees to looſen our Affections from it? ſince the Love of this World is ſo dangerous, and inconſiſtent with the

Serm. 10

Love of God, ſo contrary to the Life in Heaven, ſhall we not do wiſely to free our Minds wholly from it? that we carry not the leaſt Inclination to this World into the next; for what ſhould it do there? and will not ſo hard a Task require ſome conſiderable time? He whoſe Heart is ſtuffed with Worldly Cares, his Thoughts poſſeſſed with Riches, Honour, Pleaſure, and all the Train of Earthly *Politicks*, till the Pangs of Death ſeize him: How is it poſſible for him to cleanſe his Mind from all Delight in thoſe things, in the fond Enjoyment and Embracements whereof he chuſeth to expire? It is abſolutely neceſſary to our future Happineſs, that our Souls be purified from all thoſe Stains, which long Converſe with a ſinful, infectious World hath imprinted on them. Thanks therefore to the God of Nature, who hath in Kindneſs ordained *Old Age*, with ſuch Circumſtances, as of themſelves are apted to wean us from this World, by embittering or making unſavory all its Pleaſures; who hath allotted this time for a Retirement, wherein we may ſit ſtill, dwell with our ſelves, take a Review of all the Works of our paſt Life, as God on *the ſixth Day, when he*

he ſaw every thing that he had made, tho' what follows belongs not to a ſinful Man to ſay, *Behold it was very good!* Serm. 10

2. There is Work and Buſineſs proper to *Old Age*, which indeed cannot ſo well be performed in any other Seaſon of *Life*. The Wiſdom of all times hath committed the Management of Affairs of greateſt Concernment, not to the Raſhneſs of *Youth*, but to the ſedate Prudence of *Old Age*. From whence the ſupream Councils of the moſt flouriſhing Kingdoms have been named. It doth not the ſame things which Youth doth, yet much greater and better: It makes no Noiſe nor Fluttering, but ſits ſtill at the *Helm*, ſilently guides the *Ship*, and brings it ſafe to its deſired *Haven*. It is that Wiſdom which only Years can teach, that, like an *inviſible Spring*, ſets all the *Wheels* in Motion, from whence greateſt Actions do proceed: Yet are there other Offices neceſſary to Human Life, of great Charity and Uſe to the World, which *Old Age* moſt juſtly may pretend to. The Reputation of Experience and Prudence give ſtrong Authority to their Counſels and Inſtructions.

Serm. 10

With what Pleaſure do we read the grave Advices, the excellent Precepts, and Moral Inſtitutions which *Socrates* gave to young *Alcibiades*, and others, his Diſciples? whereby he ſowed the Seeds of Vertue in their tender Minds, furniſhed them with *Antidotes* againſt the Allurements of Pleaſure. By eaſy Queſtions naturally flowing one from the other, he ſilently diſtilled the Dew of that *Philoſophy* which he is renowned to have firſt brought down from *Heaven*. He curbed the Ambition of his noble Pupil, by ſhewing him that *Athens* (for which the World contended) was ſcarce viſible in a Map. And when we read with what Humility and ſtrong Deſires of being taught, *Emperors* and *Kings* have ſought for, and received the Diſcourſes of ancient Maſters of *Wiſdom*, we cannot but think, that the Precepts of Vertue came with more Strength and Authority from the Weakneſs of the Body; and the mortified Viſages of the Teachers added Beauty to their Diſcourſes, whereby they eaſily captivated the Hearts of their Auditors. *Come, ye Children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the Fear of the Lord*, Pſal. 34. 11. To hear *David*, now full of Years and Wiſdom,

Wiſdom, reading *Lectures* of Divine Inſtructions to *Solomon*, pouring forth *Proverbs* full of all Moral and Heavenly Knowledge, preaching dear-bought *Repentance to his Son:* To read the laſt Speeches of dying *Socrates*, or *Cyrus*; the moſt paſſionate Exhortations of the Mother in the *Maccabees!* Theſe Examples teach us, that the true Buſineſs of *Old Age* is to propagate Religion from Generation to Generation; to take care that Piety and Vertue may for ever continue upon Earth, and that there may be ſome who will worſhip God to the end of the World, when we are dead. Serm. 10

How full of Satisfaction and intellectual Pleaſure is it, to hear the Experiences of ancient Piety? *Pſal.* 37. 25. *I have been Young, and now am Old, yet did I never ſee the Righteous forſaken. Delight thy ſelf in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee thy Hearts Deſire. Mark the perfect Man, and behold the Upright, for the End of that Man is Peace.* Read and ſee, how they *Apologize* for God, and vindicate his *Attributes* on all Occaſions. *When I went into the Sanctuary, I underſtood the End of* all proſperous Impiety; they ſtand in *ſlippery places.*

and are caſt down into Deſtruction.

Serm. 01 *Before I was afflicted, I went aſtray; now have I learnt thy Statutes.*

I cannot forbear to rehearſe the noble Soliloquy of *Epictetus*, thus beſpeaking the ſupream God: μήτι ἐμεμψάμην σε τὴν διοίκησιν θεός. *Did I ever complain, O God, of thy Government? I was ſick when thou wouldſt have me to be ſo, and ſo are others; but I was ſo willingly. I was alſo poor at thy Appointment, but rejoycing. I never bore any Magiſtracy or Dignity, becauſe thou wouldſt not have me, and I never deſired it. Didſt thou ever ſee me the more dejected or melancholy for this? Have I appeared before thee at any time with a diſpleaſed Countenance? Was I not always prepared and ready for whatſoever thou requiredſt? Wilt thou now have me depart out of this Life? this Feſtival Solemnity? I am ready to go; and I render thee all Thanks, that thou haſt honoured me ſo far, as to let me keep the Feaſt with thee, to behold thy Works, and thy Oeconomy of the World. I will always Apologize for thee, O God. Let Death ſeize upon me no otherwiſe employed than thus thinking and writing ſuch things.* Reaſon and Truth are ſo, from whoſe Lips ſoever they fall; but much more perſwaſive

perſwaſive when ſupported by wiſe Experience. *Plato* aſſures us *he never knew an Old Man an Atheiſt*; a ſtrong Argument, that *Young Men* ſhould fear, leaſt by being ſo, they ſtore up Matter for a ſevere *Repentance*. Serm. 10

3. This Accuſation of *Old Age*, as dull and unactive, is founded in a falſe Valuation, and an unjuſt Opinion that *Youth* hath of its own Worth and Merit. A meer Preſumption on their great Capacities, makes them think nothing too hard for their Wit and Induſtry. *If they can but Fiddle*, (as *Themiſtocles* ſaid) *thy think they can as eaſily rule a Kingdom*. Tho' of the loweſt Condition and Emprovements, they will paſs Judgment in *Religion* or *Policy*, as if they had been long acquainted with the *Throne*, or poſſeſſed the *Chair*. And thus they entertain their own Thoughts.

Why ſhould I be poor, who, if I had Riches, have Knowledge and Reſolution to uſe them according to all the Rules of Charity and Prudence? Why ſhould I live in the Vale of Fortune, my Condition deſpicable and inglorious, who am ſo well able to employ Honour and Authority to the beſt

Serm. 10

Advantage of Men? Why ſhould I be ſick by a Fever or the Gout? confined to Privacy, whoſe Preſence is every where neceſſary, to preſerve things in Order and due Being, to keep out Ruin and Confuſion? But why ſhould ſuch a Man Die? It is even as if the Sun ſhould ſet and never riſe. Partiality to our ſelves diſguiſeth all things. Self-Love is a fruitful *Topick*. From that Fountain, Complaints and Deſires, which are ſeldom free from Reproach and Contempt of others, flow continually. There is a Verſe in *Homer*, which *Socrates* is ſaid to have admired above all others. ὅτῳ γοι ἐν μεγάροισι κακὸν τ' ἀγαθόν τ' ἐτύχθαι. In the Apoſtle's Words, *Every one mind his own Buſineſs*; order things at home, in our own Minds, our Families, our own particular Concernments; otherwiſe it will happen here as in the material World, where the Stars, which continue in their proper Stations, tho' never ſo little, conduce to the Splendor and Benefit of the *Univerſe*: But when they paſs the Bounds ſet them by Nature, and invade the *neighbouring Orbs*, they turn *Comets*, diſturb and amaze the World, but portend nothing ſo certain

as

as their own Deſtruction: And what Satisfaction? what Glory will it be? Serm. 10

When Men, by raſh Ambition to aſcend the *Chariot* which they are not able to *guide*, have ſet Heaven and Earth on Fire, filled with Confuſion things Sacred and Human; to have this only writ upon their Monument, That they *tumbled headlong* from their Height, and from their Deſigns. Certainly if the Advice of the Aged *Father* had been followed, there had not been now Mountains of Fire, *Ætna's* and *Veſuvius's*, the Terror and Deſtruction of Mankind.

Plato *pronounced that Man happy to whom it is given, even in his Old Age, to have true Opinions of things:* And another Great *Philoſopher*, to whom Nature had been ſo kind as to beſtow upon him an hundred Years of Life, yet complained, That he muſt Die *juſt beginning to be Wiſe.* Nor had theſe Men ſpent their time in Luxury and Idleneſs, not in the Purſuit of little, unprofitable Attainments, but in a ſevere, laborious, unwearied Search after the moſt refined Truth and exalted Wiſdom; and that the Endowments of their Minds were not inferiour to thoſe of any *Age*, their

Writings

Serm. 10

Writings teſtify, laſtings Monuments of their natural and acquired Underſtandings. For we are all Born *Infants*, we live a long time a Life of Senſe, whilſt Reaſon lies aſleep, ſeldom making uſe of any of her Powers, to defend us from hurtful Objects. So that the Enemies of our Souls and Reaſon, having for ſome Years held Poſſeſſion, whenever our Underſtandings begin to awake, we find our ſelves under a ſtrong Captivity, overpowered by falſe Notions of things, heavy Prejudices; from which all the Strugglings and Efforts of After-reaſonings cannot, without great Difficulty, and too long Time, if ever, deliver us.

The Life of Man being generally but a continued *Lethargy*, which if it admit of any *lucid Intervals*, they ſerve only to ſhew the Badneſs of the Diſtemper, not help him to a Cure. We lift up our Eyes, and ſee ſome Glimmerings of Light, and a more intellectual Life, but lay down our Heads again, and ſleep on, till either the Frame of Nature in us be diſſolved, or we find our Souls placed upon the Confines of *Eternity*. Theſe things being thus, this Accuſation is very unjuſtly formed againſt *Old Age*; from which, Youth is highly ungrateful,

if

if it acknowledge not all the Wiſdom the World and it ſelf pretend to, to be derived. Serm. 10

II. Old Age is commonly attended with many great Pains and Diſtempers, ſuch as to the ſtrength of Youth are very grievous, but to the decays of *Age* almoſt inſupportable. Thoſe Diſeaſes which a former vigour with little help of Art had vanquiſhed, now return, and with advantage make their freſh Aſſaults, we thought them quite dead, but they only lay hid, watching a better opportunity; former Wounds, old Bruiſes, ſtiffneſs and wearineſs from immoderate Labour, and Pity, great Pity it is! Diſeaſes ariſing from hard yet pleaſing *Studies*, tho' directed to the advantage both of Body and Mind, now join their Forces altogether, totally to demoliſh this *tottering Fabrick*, our Earthly Tabernacle.

To alleviate theſe Evils, theſe Conſiderations, from Reaſon and Religion, may be uſeful.

1. It hath ever been accounted Wiſdom to conform to the Order of the Creation, Folly to contradict it, to follow

Serm. 10

low *Nature* and to follow God are all one in the Language of true *Philoſophy*, there is a certain Courſe of Nature One and Simple, allowing to every part of Life what is tempeſtive and proper to it, as the Ferocity of *Youth*, the Gravity of a more confirmed Age are Natural, ſo do the Evils which accompany *Old Age* compleat its Maturity. To deſire *Old Age* free from theſe Incommodities, which almoſt make up its Definition, is to contradict Nature and Reaſon, as it is to deſire all Summer, all Day, no Night, or Winter.

To live without growing Old is the Priviledge only of *Eternity*, ſo long as there is *Matter* and *Motion* in the World there will be continued Alterations, Corruptions, and Generations. Health and Sickneſs, Life and Death, there is a mixture of all things, the whole World grows old, numbers of Years, continuance of Time ſhew the irreſiſtibility of its Power, even upon this *Earth*, *Sun*, and *Planets*, the Earth is neither ſo Fruitful nor ſo Beautiful as it was after the *Creation*, thoſe Earthquakes, (whoſe terrifying returns are in latter Times more frequent than formerly,) like the Convulſions of a dying Man, are certain

Symptoms

Symptoms of its approaching Diſſolution. Serm. 10

There is a time for every thing, expect not at the Age of *Neſtor* to outrun *Achilles*, if thou retaineſt the Wiſdom of the firſt, be content without the Activity of the latter, beſides, at this time of the Worlds Age, it would be ridiculous to Draw the Picture of a Man an Hundred Years Old with the ſame Complexion as *Methuſalem* might have been Drawn with at the ſame Age, ſo it is to deſire his Health and Vigour an Hundred Years that bear the proportion but of *Ten* to our Times; ſince therefore Nature will have its courſe, learn to ſubmit with ſatisfaction.

2. Conſider, (what is moſt true) that *Old Age* is unjuſtly accuſed of moſt of thoſe Diſeaſes which commonly accompany it, they proceeding not from it as their immediate Cauſe, but are the Natural Effects of a former ill managed irregular Life, the imprudent Actions, vicious Practices, unlawful Liberties, the reiterated Intemperances of a former Courſe of Life, have long ſince ſown the Seeds of thoſe Pains and Sickneſs which now diſcover themſelves, to our great Diſquiet;

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Diſquiet; Actions when they are paſt do not prove *non Entities*, but have their Operations, their Effects, good or bad, will certainly follow them, tho' they be paſt quite out of the Memory, no Man knows nor can foreſee the Infinite Conſequences of any one Action we do, nor how long they will continue, which ought to make us think well before we act; ſome are of Opinion, that (the World being full of Matter) the leaſt *Motion* we can make is propagated throughout the *Univerſe*, Nature moves ſometimes in ſo vaſt a *Sphere*, that tho' the Actions done may ſeem to be loſt in ſo long a *Revolution*, yet one time or other they will make their approaches, and preſent themſelves to our Senſe, will force a remembrance of them.

We ſee daily that the Vices of *Parents* tranſmit Diſeaſes to more than one Generation, they leave to their Children *Glorious Titles* of Honour, but with ſurfeited unhealthy Bodies, they leave great Eſtates, multitude of Riches, but with ſo *Morbid* a *Conſtitution*, as can receive ſmall Comfort from them, they give their Children *Life*, but full of the Miſeries and painful *Symptoms* of Death,

Death, more than ordinary wiſe was that *Philoſopher*, who having conſtantly practiſed thoſe Rules of Virtue which he preſcribed to others, when he was more than an Hundred Years of Age, had nothing to accuſe or complain of his Old Age for. Serm. 10

3. Early Piety will prevent many of thoſe Evils to which that part of Life is liable. Temperance and Virtue cheriſh Nature, and confirm a good Conſtitution, which is too often weakned by violent Paſſions and Vices. By the Rules of Religion many have run through a very long Life, and arrived at the extremity of Age without any conſiderable interruption of a conſtant Health, but wholly free from all torturing Diſeaſes, and at laſt died, (as *Heſiod* ſays Men died in the *Golden Age*) only as overcome with Sleep.

After a Life thus led, *Old Age* will be ſtill fit for Buſineſs, ſtill uſeful to the World, and therefore will be every where as Honourable as at *Sparta*, (called by the Antients *Honeſtiſſimum Domicilium Senectutis*) where it had ever the greateſt Reſpect and Reverence.

4. Early

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4. Early Piety will alleviate and ſoften thoſe Inconveniences which cannot be prevented.

1. By a due application of all thoſe general Rules given to ſupport us under Afflictions.

That they proceed from a Wiſe and Loving *Father*, are ſent for neceſſary *Ends* of Good, to mortify ſome *Sin*, to imbitter ſomething wherein we take too much *Pleaſure*, to ſtrengthen our *Patience*, to confirm our Reliance upon God, to ſet forth great Examples of the Power of *Religion*, to make every Virtue more *illuſtrious*, theſe are all Noble Deſigns, worthy of God, and of Infinite Advantage to Man, which however in the briskneſs and vigour of healthful Age they are oft deſpiſed or neglected, yet will it be our Wiſdom to furniſh our Minds with them againſt the time of Need. When *Old Rabbi Eleazar* was dangerouſly Sick, ſeveral of his Friends went to Viſit him, moſt complained what an unſpeakable Loſs they ſhould have if he died, one ſaid thou art better to *Iſrael* than the Dew of Heaven, another, thou art better than the Sun in the *Firmament*, a third, thou art

art better than *Father and Mother*, but the laſt, *Rabbi Aquila* ſaid, *Father I am come to Congratulate with you this Chaſtizement*, which unexpected Addreſs occaſioned a large Diſcourſe, (well enough from a *Jew*) of the Benefits ariſing from Afflictions. Serm. 10

2. The Applauſes of a good Conſcience will mightily mitigate and ſweeten the moſt grievous attendances of *Old Age*.

To recollect the Good he by the Grace of God hath done in all the Capacities of his Life, if he be *Rich and Great* in the World, how he hath uſed his Power and Authority, to the encouragement of Religion, and the ſuppreſſion of all Impiety; if *Poor*, with what Submiſſion to Providence, and painful Induſtry in his Calling he hath demeaned himſelf, and ſometimes afforded his Mite to the *Relief* of greater Neceſſities.

To look back, and conſider, out of how troubleſom a World he hath eſcaped, from what *untoward a Generation* he hath ſaved himſelf, with what Struglings and Conflicts he hath preſerved his Virtue againſt the multitude and power of evil Examples, that he hath kept his Religion inviolate amidſt all the Viciſſitudes and Revolutions that have

happened, as *Æneas* first secured his Gods
Serm. 10 out of the *Flames* of his Country, and then his *Aged Father*, whereby he seems to have fulfilled both *Tables*, and hath merited the Name of *Pious*, to all Generations.

What Pleasure? how satisfactory must be the Entertainment? to recollect the various Occurrences of his *Pilgrimage*? to tell, (not as *Scipio*) how many Cities he hath Sacked, how many Battels he hath Won, how many Millions of Mankind he hath made to Die, but of the unaccountable *Providence* he hath observed, the Prosperous and Adverse, the Joyful and the Melancholick, the light and the dark parts which have composed his Life.

To tell what dismal Dangers he hath escaped, to describe the *Scylla's* and the *Charibdis's* which have swallowed up many Mortals, to rehearse of his beloved Companions dead Drunk with *Circean-Cups* of Earthly Pleasures, transfigured into the most impure Beasts, how he by God's Grace maintained himself a rational Man, the Temptations he hath conquered, the Conflicts endured, by what Courage and Resolution he hath oft broke thro' the *Snares of the Devil*, with what

what Pains and Conſtancy he hath Cul- Serm. 10
tivated his Soul, Eradicated vicious Habits, and Adorned his Mind with the moſt amiable Flowers of all Virtues, he can ſay with *Heraclitus*, *I have alſo had my difficult Labours as well as* Hercules, *and more than twelve*; I have conquered Pleaſures, I have conquered Riches, I have ſubdued Cowardice and Flattery, neither Fear nor Intemperance can controul me, Grief and Anger flee away before me, theſe are the Victories for which I ſhall be Crowned, as being Maſter of my ſelf, ſo he hath not loſt his Life, but improved it, to the gaining of a better, having done all the good Offices to Mankind in his Power; laſtly, as Excellent *Thuanus* ſpeaks of himſelf, *Facto vel Verbo nullis Injurius, aliorum Injurias Patienter tuli, With Chriſtian Patience he hath born Injuries, but never did any by Word or Deed*, this Man lives in Everlaſting Light and Joy, his Sun can never ſet, nothing can diſturb ſuch Tranquility.

3. A third Evil imputed to *Old Age* is, that with moſt it is a time deſtitute of Pleaſure, the Supports from Religion and common Reaſon in this Caſe are ſo many, that they need not to be menti-

oned, Senſual Pleaſure, (tho' if I could
Serm. 10 believe God to be the immediate Author of thoſe Impreſſions which cauſe it, I ſhould have the leſs to ſay againſt it) is of ſo low and mean a Conſideration to a *Wiſe Man*, ſo empty and vain, of ſo ſhort continuance, and doth ſo either nauſeate, or leave a Sting behind it, that it ought in all Reaſon to be reckoned a true Advantage of Old Age, that it is in a great meaſure deprived of it. Is there any Compariſon betwixt *Intellectual* Pleaſures and thoſe which are *Corporeal?* No Man ſcarce was ever ſo Bruitiſh as in the *Theory*, to determine for theſe againſt the other. If we preſerve the Studies of our Youth to Old Age, we ſhall find that Philoſophy and other Learning will give us pleaſant Entertainment, to read the Thoughtful Diſcourſes of the Wiſeſt Men of all Ages, their *Encomiums* upon Virtue, their *Satyrs* upon Vice, their Prudent Sentences and moſt Honourable Examples of Life in *Books* recorded, theſe are indeed ſometimes tranſporting, but the Bible, the Bible, the Bible is the true ἰαλρεῖον ψυχῶν, the *Treaſury of Remedies infallible* for all Diſeaſes that can attack the Mind, hither come all *ye that are weary, and ye ſhall find Reſt for your Souls.*

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O Religion! thou moſt unerring Guide of Human Life, Complexion of all Virtues, Expeller of Vices, Spring of true unfading Pleaſure, one day ſpent according to thy Precepts is infinitely preferable to a Sinning Eternity. Serm. 10

There is no greater Proof of the Corruption and Decay of Piety in this *preſent Generation*, than the multitude of Books Writ for the Cure of them, Love to God and the Souls of Men hath produced ſo many Diſcourſes of Wiſe Devotion, Compoſed by Learned, Spiritual Phyſicians, that, would Men but make uſe of their *Preſcriptions*, what the *Epigram* ſays of *Hippocrates* might more juſtly be applied to our days ——— χ᾽ νεκύων ἠν᾽ σπάνις ἐν ἄιδῃ, *very few or none need go to Hell.* Thoſe Excellent Perſons with indefatigable Study have well followed the Advice of *Solomon*, (Eccleſ. 12. 12.) in the Senſe of the *Chaldee Paraphraſt*, (which the *Hebrew* Text will admit) *My Son be admoniſhed to make many Books of Piety without end*, as the ſureſt way to confute and ſilence thoſe Principles of *Atheiſm* and Immorality he had before recited. Here then is delightful Employment for the moſt Exquiſite Underſtanding, to read and conſider how Valiant-

ly the Champions of our Religion have
Serm. 10 contended for the Faith, what Triumphs they have made over Infidelity, with what irrefragable Reaſons they have aſſerted the Truth of Revelation and Excellency of Chriſtianity, how ſucceſsful hath been their Zeal for the Honour of their Saviour, defending his Divinity againſt the moſt furious Onſets of a number of ſubtil Hereticks; how *Militant* our Mother this Church hath been ever ſince its Reformation, conformable to the *Primitive*, not only in the Purity of Doctrine, but in thoſe Sufferings which commonly do attend it; laſtly, to Bleſs God for that Security ariſing from thoſe Victories, which his *Sons* by their Magnanimity and inceſſant Labours have purchaſed over his Enemies, on *the Right Hand and on the Left*; theſe are great Contemplations, which raiſe in the Soul thoſe milder Paſſions, full of Joy and Pleaſure, and of great uſe to promote the Mind in the Exerciſe of Devotion, the moſt neceſſary Buſineſs of *Old Age*, the Directions to the Practice of which, contained in the *Books* of our days, are ſo many, and of ſo ſolid Piety, as not only take off the Reproach of the want of ſuch Spiritual Helps, but alſo are able

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to convince the World that we have all Advantages required to render our Lives as Holy and Pure as is our Religion. *The Whole Duty of Man* is a juſtly admired Book, reſerved by Providence to ſtir up and enliven the almoſt extinguiſhed Sparks of Piety in a degenerate Age, and as it were to ſtop Religion, that it forſake not quite the Earth, whoſe Author, tho' as the Head of *Nile*, (after ſo long enquiry) he ſtill hides himſelf, and is unknown, yet ceaſeth not by his refreſhing Waters to make *Fruitful our Barren Land, and with his various Streams to make glad this City of God.* Serm. 10

4. The laſt great Evil of *Old Age*, is the approach and nearneſs of Death, which ſurely ſhould be eſteemed a great Conſolation to a good Man, that now the time draws on, when he ſhall be releaſed from all the Troubles of Life, and receive the Reward of his Virtue. Death cannot be terrible to him, who having led a Life of Reaſon and Religion, hath nothing elſe to do but to *reſign up his Soul* into the Hands of his Gracious Redeemer, whoſe Life, tho' not free from many Sins and Errors, yet they no where appear to his Trouble, having formerly cleanſed his Soul by ſincere

Serm. 10 Repentance, *thro' the Blood of Chriſt*, and his plenteous Redemption. He kept ſtrict Reckoning, tho' his Failings were frequent, ſo were his Sorrows, and his Soul now paſſing into Eternity enjoys a moſt comfortable Proſpect of the *Promiſed Land, Everlaſting Life.*

Let us all remember this, That the two Staffs which only can ſupport *Old Age*, are, the Reflections upon a Life religiouſly ſpent, and well-grounded Hopes of a better. Theſe muſt go together: For it is vain to hope for a better Life, if this have not been good; and without theſe, *Old Age* hath nothing to keep up it ſelf from ſinking under ſo heavy a Burthen. The Conſciouſneſs of a wicked Life paſt, and deſpair of being happy hereafter, will be intollerable Meditations. Let Youth therefore conſider well this Advice of *Solomon*: He had taſted unlawful Pleaſures as much as any Man, yet it proved to him *Vexation of Spirit*, believe his Account: And if ye reſolve ſtill to go on in a ſinful Courſe, now and then think what you will do when *the evil Days come.* But I ſhall apply more particularly,

1. To you *Aged Men.* You whoſe grey Hairs and weakened Bodies, whoſe Palſie,

Palſy Heads and withered Countenances, whoſe decayed Memories and fainting Powers, are daily Notices, That ere long you muſt leave this World, looſe the Sight of *this Sun*, and bid farewell to your Lands and Houſes, your Friends and Acquaintance, your Wife and Children, to ſit down in the *Chamber of Death*, to take up your Lodgings in the Grave, never to riſe till the general Reſurrection. To you I ſpeak, ye Aged Fathers, if there be any who have ſpent your Years in Vanity, your Days in Folly, who have hitherto little thought upon God, nor lived in Remembrance of him. That you would now at length bring him to your Minds, and let him poſſeſs your Thoughts; meditate upon his Goodneſs, which, amidſt infinite Provocations, ſpared you, and hath not taken you away in your Sins. Serm. 10

Do you yet love this World, or find any Delight in thinking upon the former times of youthful Vanity? they cannot comfort you. Can *Gold* reſtore the Briskneſs of Youth? or Silver cure thy Old Age Infirmities? Can the Conſideration of thy Lands fill thy Veins with warm Blood? or the Sight of Riches ſupply thy Nerves with ſtrong

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and active Spirits? No. *Aſclepiadum*
Serm. 10 *ceſſit in vanum labor ------ bonus Reneal-*
mius, ------ Stertit profundum nocte dum
crucior miſer. All medicinal Secrets prove
vain, thy Learned Phyſician and Friend
ſleeps all Night ſoundly, whilſt thou art
miſerably tormented. Quid moramur in
terris? Why ſtay we any longer here?
Tentanda eſt in cœlum per pias preces via.
Let us fly to Heaven in devout Meditati-
ons. Nec vita tanti eſt, tamdiù, ut vi-
vas, mori. 'Tis not worth the while, for
a little Life, to be ſo long a Dying. God
only can give thee Comfort, he only is
able, and, if thou ſeriouſly applieſt thy
ſelf, will reſtore thy Youth again in the
Reſurrection of the Juſt; thy dead Bones
ſhall live, and riſe to a never-ending
Life; thou ſhalt Die no more, no more
be troubled with Pangs and Tortures of
Diſeaſes, *all Tears ſhall be wiped away.*
Methinks then the uncertain remainder
of thy Life ſhould be wholly ſpent in
Remembrance of him, on whoſe Mercies
thou muſt rely, in begging Pardon for
thy paſt Sins, and by all poſſible means
to get Aſſurance of the Favour of thy
Great Judge and moſt *Gracious Redeemer.*

2. *To Youth*, whoſe Bodies are
Strong and Active, whoſe Blood is
florid,

Florid, whoſe Age Green and Beautiful as the Spring. Hear God how kindly he takes an Early Seeking of him, Jerem. 2. 2. *Go cry in the Ears of* Jeruſalem *ſaith the Lord, I remember the Kindneſs of thy Youth, when thou wenteſt after me in the Wilderneſs. Now make an Offering of your ſelves to him, and put it not off till Old Age, for if you offer the Blind for Sacrifice, is it not Evil? if you offer the Lame and the Sick is it not Evil? will he be pleaſed with it?* Malachy 1. 8. If when ye are yet in a doubt betwixt two Ways, and *two Maſters* deſert your Service, Ye chooſe the Way of Vertue, and God for your Maſter, the Wiſdom of that Choice will make you for ever Happy. You may indeed be *Old*, but thouſands Die in their Tender Years. For behold ye (little ones) when ye go out of the Doors of this Church, ſee if you can find never a Grave of your own length, is there no Spot of Ground that ſwells with the Body of a Child, they are not all the Graves of Old Men, every one of you may find one of your own Growth. Let it be your care to pleaſe God, to Pray to him, and Read his Holy Word, ſpare a little time from your Sports to *Remember your Creator*. If you live Serm. 10

Serm. 10

Live to be Old, there will be ſo little Comfort in the World, ſo much diſcomfort in your own Bodies, that you will ſcarce think that time of Life worth Thanking God for. Life will then ſeem tedious, you wilt rather wiſh your ſelf out of it, than bleſs God for bringing you into it. You will have had ſo much Experience of the *Vanity and Vexation*, Labour and Pain the World is full of, that you will account it no Benefit ever to have been in it. *Remember God* in thy Youth, thy Brave and Healthful Time, whilſt thou takeſt Pleaſure, and thinkeſt it a Favour that thou Liveſt. Farther, will it be a convenient time to begin to be Religious under the Torture of the Gout, or Stone? will thy Mind have freedom to do ſo great a Work as it is to be truly good, when racked with ſo tormenting Diſeaſes, out of Frame by its *Sympathy* with a dying Body! when thy Memory is almoſt loſt, thy Brain clouded, thy Mind drowſie, and a Lethargy hath ſeized thee, art thou then fit for Acts of Devotion, Prayer and Meditation, which require the moſt Serene and undiſturbed Soul? The Habits of Sin contracted in a long Life will be ſtrongly Rooted in thy Nature, Satan hath had

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ſo long quiet Poſſeſſion, that he will plead *Preſcription*, it will be almoſt impoſſible to caſt that *Strong-Man* out. Truſt not therefore to the Preſumed Strength of *Old Age*, but remember God now in the beſt of thy days, now thy Body is free from Diſeaſes, thy Mind Strong, thy Head clear, thy Underſtanding Lively and Operative. Serm. 10

And here it will not be improper to the Text, or the Sacred Office of this Day, to mention one great neglect in Religion, wherein Young Perſons will find themſelves moſt concerned. It is eaſie to be obſerved how few of this Age accept of this Opportunity of the *Lords Supper* to remember their Creator, and dedicate themſelves to his Service. This Chriſtian Duty, deſigned to cheriſh the Seeds of Piety, is by them generally laid aſide and forgotten, as if it were no Part of their Religion, or not agreeable to the Gaiety of their Humour. But was this *Holy Sacrament* Inſtituted only *for Old* and Dying Perſons? was it intended only a *Viaticum* to refreſh thoſe who are almoſt going out of the World. Aſſuredly the Vow you made in *Baptiſm* is always upon you? You are now entring into a World full of Temptations, beſet

beſet with cruel Malicious Enemies on e-
Serm. 10 very ſide. The Briskneſs of your Age, Activity of Temper, and a certain Levity of Mind, to which your Years do ſubject you, will rather betray you into their Powers, than defend you, or enable you to Conquer them.

You therefore have more need of that Spiritual Aſſiſtance conveyed in this Sacrament. The long Experience which Old Age hath had of the Subtilty, and Falſeneſs of the Enemies of Mankind, hath taught it to be Watchful and wary, to give no Ear to their Promiſes, nor reſpect thoſe Allurements, by which the inconſiderateneſs of Youth is apt to be betrayed to its Ruin.

Be not afraid, Piety and Devotion will never ſpoil your *Parts*, nor dull the Edge of your Ingenuity. The Exerciſes of Prayer and Divine Meditation, roborate the Mind as Labour doth the Body, they do Refine and improve all the Faculties of the Soul to a degree of Exaltation, which neither *Geometry* nor *Metaphyſicks* (the beſt Methods Philoſophy did invent) could ever Raiſe it to.

The *Bible* will be a Book of good Senſe in defiance of all that Sinful Folly, which

which the deluded World adores as *Wit*, in *Blaſphemous Plays* and Immoral Diſcourſes. To end this, let all wilful Neglecters of this Sacrament, Young or Old, conſider what they will plead, or what they will anſwer in that Day, when *Chriſt the Judge ſhall ſay, Depart from me, I know you not.* I ſeldom ſaw you in my Houſe of Prayer, or if your Bodies were preſent, *your Hearts were far from me*: But I never, or very rarely met you at my *Table, tho' I prepared Food from Heaven*, and often and earneſtly did invite you: You made uſe of every pitiful, unworthy Excuſe to abſent your ſelves, preferring any Earthly thing before my Company and my Bleſſings. *Depart from me, I know you not.* Serm. 10

3. *To Parents.* That the Care to bring your *Children up in the Fear of God* may bear Proportion to the Love you pretend to have for them. Is it not pity ſuch otherwiſe innocent Souls ſhould be miſerable by your Fault? We know not indeed the Perfection of Heavenly Happineſs; yet now I am apt to think it muſt needs be of pungent Concernment for a Parent to conſider, that his deareſt Child, (or Friend, whom he loved as his own Soul) by his neglect, tho' repented of, ſhould be excluded Happineſs, and be everlaſtingly tormented. If *the rich Man*, in Hell, had pity for his *Brethren*, why ſhould it not have place in Heaven, where Charity is conſummated? where are the Compaſſions of a Father? the Yernings of the Bowels of a Mother towards her beloved Child?

Take heed how you ſet your Children bad Examples, let them never hear you *Swear, Lie*, or *take Gods Name in Vain.* This is an ill remembrance of him, which yet we hear every day in every Street, as if it was the firſt thing they Learn, which you muſt ſurely Account for.

The *Athenian Youth*, who had been ſometime

in

Serm. 10

in the School of *Plato*, when he returned home and ſaw his Father Angry oft, in Peeviſh, Sower Humours, wondred what the Matter was! he knew not what it meant, he had yet no Name to call that Temper by, having never met with any ſuch thing in his *Maſters* Houſe, but all Calmneſs and Serenity. To check Vice, and incourage Virtue is all Mens Duty; to ſave a Soul every one is a *Prieſt*, every one a Magiſtrate, but much more is the Obligation of a *Parent*.

You cry and bewail their Temporal Death, value no Expence or Labour to cure the Sickneſs of the *Body*; you cannot bear to ſee your Children in any Pain; yet you ſeem altogether unconcerned how to ſecure them from eternal Torments, everlaſting Death. You deck and adorn their Bodies with all Study, with any Coſt, provide Tutors for all ſorts of external Accompliſhments, but you ſuffer their Souls to lie uncultivated, no Root of Vertue planted there, all grown over with Weeds.

When *Socrates* his Father conſulted the *Oracle* concerning the Education of his Son, he was anſwered. *He ſhould not trouble himſelf, but leave the Child to his own Genius, He had ſomething within him, which would direct him far better than any Maſter. Few are now Born of ſuch Happy Inclinations.*

Show not your Tenderneſs in *Humouring* them in their Follies, and beginning of Vice. Say not you ſhall break their Spirits, or make them Melancholick by curbing and condradicting their Wills. If you truly love them, uſe all Methods to make them Good. Then will the Principal be ſaved, tho, God ſhould take them out of this World; and they will for ever Bleſs God and your Care when they come to Heaven.

MVSEVM BRITANNICVM

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